THE COMPLETE PREACHER.

VOL. 3. NEW YORK, AUGUST, 1878. No. 5.

Duties and Dignity of the Pastoral Office.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY S. D. Burchard, D.D., JUNE 14, 1846, THE SABBATH AFTER HIS INSTALLATION AS PASTOR OF THE THIRTEENTH STREET CHURCH, NEW YORK; REPEATED MAY 5, 1878, ON THE OCCASION OF THE THIRTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS PASTORATE.

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.—John xxi: 15, 16, 17.

PETER had been called from the humble office of a fisherman to that of an apostle of Christ. The call he cheerfully obeyed, and entered his new relations with characteristic ardor and enthusiasm. Both in professions of faith and in practical indications of love to their common Master, he usually appeared the foremost of all the apostles. But that very forwardness and intrepidity of spirit which peculiarly fitted him for bold and hazardous undertakings proved a snare, by leading him to rely too much upon his own personal and unaided strength.

When Jesus, in the near prospect of the awful sufferings which He was about to endure, informed His disciples that they would all be offended because of Him that night, Peter, under the high promptings of love, felt superior even to the apprehension of danger, and replied, "Though all men should be offended because of Thee, yet will not I." Doubtless it was his honest impression that no imaginable combination of circumstances, no hostile array, no menace or threat could deter him from expressing his attachment to Christ. But no sooner had his Master been betrayed and His enemies gained a seeming victory over Him than Peter's heart sunk within him; his resolution fled, and on that very night he denied repeatedly and with oaths that he had any connection whatever with Him

whom he had just expressed a willingness to follow even to prison or to death. Whatever may have been the *subjective* reason of this lamentable defection, whether a lack of *faith*, *fortitude* or *manly courage*, we know that when the violence of temptation had so far expended itself as to permit deliberate reflection, he shed over the turpitude of his crime the tears of an abasing repentance—of an unsoftened and heart-rending remorse. It is possible, however, that no event in the history of Peter furnished him with such rich and salutary instruction as this denial of his Master. The lessons of human weakness, of caution, of self-distrust and of tender reliance upon divine grace which were thus learned had, no doubt, a powerful and conservative influence upon him in every after period of his life. From this point his life was no longer checkered with frailties and virtues. It became one steady course of active Christianity, shining, like the path of the just, more and more to the perfect day.

We accordingly find him displaying, on the occasion which the text contemplates, a truly meek and humble temper of mind. His sincerity in religious profession he, indeed, perseveringly affirms ; but while he does so, accompanying his professions with a solemn appeal to the Searcher of hearts, he utters not a syllable which savors of self-confidence. The question proposed to him and repeated once and again was certainly, under the circumstances, especially adapted deeply to affect him ; and when it was asked the third time he was filled with grief, and gave vent to his struggling emotions by saying, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." By his denial of his blessed Master, Peter evidently forfeited his title to be ranked among the apostles. Without new and explicit instruction he most probably would not have presumed to re-enter upon the duties of the apostolical office. This view receives confirmation from the message sent to Peter immediately after Christ's resurrection. "Go your way," said the angel to the women who had come early to visit the sepulchre, "and tell his disciples and *Peter* that he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see Him as He said unto you."

Here Peter is named distinct from the disciples, which seems to imply that he had lost his claim to apostleship. This view is also confirmed by the Scripture chosen for our present meditation, where Peter, on giving satisfactory evidence of his humiliation and repentance and his solicitude to distinguish himself by future zeal and fidelity, is restored to the apostolic office. If you do, indeed, love me, said Jesus to him, and love the work of the ministry above all other occupations, then employ yourself *wholly* in feeding my lambs and sheep.

Without a more minute analysis of the text, let it be our

object during this calm hour of thought to show that the official work of a minister is to feed the lambs and the sheep of Christ's flock, and that *love* should be the great principle by which he should be actuated in the performance of his work.

Christ is styled the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, and this high office he sustains with the most constant, unwearied and vigilant fidelity. The Psalmist took this comforting view of Christ when in the fullness of his heart he exclaimed, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want; He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." He feeds His flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in His bosom, and *gently* leads those that are with young; and He requires the ministers of His grace, as under-shepherds, carefully to imitate *His* example.

The original term which in the text is translated *feed* is of very strong and extensive import. In general it means to exercise the office of a shepherd, which implies not only furnishing a supply of food, but also exercising various other forms of pastoral care. How much it implies may be rendered evident by the following induction of particulars:

I. And, first, it is part of the duty of a shepherd to be a *guide* to his flock. Of all animals in the world, sheep stand most in need of a guide; they are both timorous and defenceless; they are more liable to go astray and less capable of rectifying their mistakes and returning to their appropriate fold or pasturage than any other; and hence in this particular they very strikingly represent the flock of Christ.

"It is not in man that walketh," says the Scripture, "to direct his steps." And certain it is that even the *renewed* man is liable to err—prone to wander out of the way, and forsake the rich fields of God's grace and wander upon the dark and barren mountains of sin. Accordingly the influence and instruction of a guide are as necessary in the latter case as in the former. As it belongs to the literal keeper of sheep to go before them, pointing the way and calling them to follow, so does it belong to the spiritual shepherd to go in and out before the people over whom the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer. He is to lead them beside the still waters into green pastures, conduct them over the broad fields of evangelical truth and into all the paths of practical obedience. While he exhibits the law in all its breadth and spirituality as a rule of life and the example of Christ as the only perfect pattern of holy living, he is to call upon them to be followers of him, even as he is of the Master. Said Paul to Timothy, "Be thou an example to believers in all things." We are imitative creatures, and much more disposed to follow example than to obey

precept. Plain minds are more sensibly affected by the former, which is the *practice*, than by the latter, which may be called the theory. Mankind are more easily *led* by one going before them than driven by one at their back urging and goading them by threatenings and commands. Ministers are appropriately represented under the figure of a star, to illumine, to *guide*, to cheer, to bless. Its lodgment is a candlestick—a church brightened with its heavenly brilliancy and upholding its pure and steady radiations. Ministers must be like the star of Bethlehem, which did not only *direct* and *light* the wise men of the East to Christ, but also *led* them to Him. A preacher whose practice is inconsistent with his teaching stands before his people condemned out of his own mouth. He destroys by his life *out* of the pulpit the fair fabric which he builds while in it. We cannot reasonably expect others to follow our doctrine when in practice we forsake it ourselves. Men generally *see* much more quickly than they hear. We must preach the gospel to their *eyes* as well as in their ears. We must embody it in our example, make it appear as a living and impressive reality; prove it, demonstrate it, illustrate its power to cheer, to uphold, to fortify against the influence of temptation, to raise us superior to earth and sin. Thus do we become living epistles seen and read of all men, the true successors of the apostles, "in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity;" and then our profiting will appear to all. Such a beautiful harmony of theory and practice of teaching and example will secure confidence, win respect, make the ministry a light and a blessing to the world—give the gospel a power over the human conscience which neither genius nor eloquence can secure without it. It is the sacred amulet, the glorious phylactery of a faithful pastor, without which he is neither fitted for his office nor will he be blessed in his work. This guidance of the flock is a real and essential part of the service intended in the text by feeding the lambs and the sheep of Christ.

II. It is also a part of the duty of a shepherd to provide *food* for his flock. Sheep must have pasturage as well as guidance and protection. Appropriate and wholesome food is essential to their life and welfare. They cannot subsist upon rocks and trees or arid fields; neither can the flock of Christ. The Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls has fully anticipated this want. He laid down His life for the sheep, and they are called upon to eat His flesh and to drink His blood under the assurance that His flesh is meat indeed and His blood is drink indeed. There is truly in Him an inexhaustible fullness of grace, and He has appointed a variety of ordinances as means of communicating this grace to His people. He has also enjoined it upon His ministers, as under-shepherds, faithfully to

apply these means for their spiritual nourishment and edification. Among such means, the word of truth occupies a prominent and essential position. It is by this instrumentality that the life of grace is at first produced in the soul. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." "Born again," says the apostle, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever." And it is by the instrumentality of the same Word that the life of grace is maintained and perfected in the soul of the Christian. It is his proper aliment—the true manna of life, under whose invigorating effects he is to grow up into the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ. All his Christian graces, his love, his humility, his faith depend upon a faithful application and appreciation of the Word. While all who receive and honor it as the Word of God will find it to be profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness, its influence as a means of nourishment will be proportioned to the reverence, the diligence, the prayerfulness with which it is received for the attainment of this end. It is as important that there should be good hearing as good preaching, that the Word of God may *run* and be glorified. Whether it shall prove a savor of life unto life or of death unto death depends not so much upon the speaker as upon the hearer. A responsibility is indeed upon both—upon the *former*, that he provide wholesome and appropriate food, that he distribute it in due season and in proper proportions. This done, then the responsibilty is upon the hearer; if he decline to hear and receive the truth, he alone is guilty of moral starvation and suicide. But let the minister preach the Word, let him be instant in season and out of season—let him sow beside all waters, and God shall be glorified though Israel be not gathered. I say, let him preach the *Word;* not philosophy, not the metaphysics of the schools, not the theories of human wisdom, but *the Word* in its simplicity and purity, in the amplitude of its provisions and the adaptation of its promises—the Word in its awful severity and sweetness, the Word which Paul declared to be "the wisdom of God and the power . . . of God unto salvation." *Thus* to preach the *Word* requires no little skill, ample and varied scholarship—a deep insight into the meaning of the original Scriptures, a profound and unquestioned piety. We need, in this age and in this country, a well-taught and highly-gifted ministry, a ministry whose weapons are polished and prepared to meet the skeptic on his own ground—to meet reason with reason, science with science and learning with learning. Not that I would intimate that there is any conflict between science and revelation. The Christian world is beginning to see that the Word of God wars not with His works, that every new revelation of nature but strengthens

the chain which links earth and sky—adds to the battlements of that religion whose foundation is the eternal rock and whose pinacle is bright with supernal glories. Still, we need a learned ministry, able to show this essential and beautiful harmony; a ministry that need not be ashamed, skillfully handling the Word of life, dealing to each one his portion in due season—unfolding to the haughty philosopher the unsearchable riches of Christ and yet with equal success revealing Him even to the apprehension of children; a ministry that shall rise above the dry and dusty details of skeletons and creeds and preach Christ as He lived, as He taught, as He spoke at Olivet, as He prayed in Gethsemane, as He died on Calvary, "the just for the unjust that He might bring us unto God"; a ministry that shall be able to probe the heart with these essential truths, and open to the thirsty lip and fainting spirit the gushing waters of life, and feed the hungry soul with the true bread from heaven. This, *all this* is implied in feeding the lambs and the sheep of Christ's flock. Another means of their nutriment and support, which it is the duty of the faithful pastor to use and apply, are the baptism and the Lord's Supper. These sacraments belong to that class of ordinances which we usually denominate *sealing* and *confirming*. They possess no inherent and necessary power to confer grace even though administered by those who claim a succession the most direct from the apostles. Their efficacy, under the blessing of God, depends upon a docile and proper state of heart. Like every other means of grace, if perverted, they prove a savor of death unto death. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

Their special object is not so much the conversion of sinners as the edification and sanctification of believers; and as this is the purpose for which they have been instituted, every Christian pastor ought to administer them accordingly with fidelity and zeal. Too much effort cannot be employed to bring such as are without into the fold of Christ, that they may be fit subjects of the initiating seal. Nor can too much effort be employed for prevailing upon the young who have been early dedicated to God in baptism to enter into the spirit of the baptismal covenant by giving themselves up unreservedly to the service and glory of their Redeemer. They sustain a tender and peculiar relation to the Church—they are the lambs of the flock, and should be recognized and cared for by Christ's under-shepherds. He Himself, when upon earth, was interested in the hosannas of children, and they received His gracious benedictions. And so soon as the graces of the Spirit are developed in their character and lives, are they to be welcomed to all the covenanted blessings and privileges of Christ's fold. Think of a tender lamb exposed to the perils of a forest—to beasts of

prey, with no kind shepherd near, no sympathy, no succor. Let the faithful pastor imitate the care of the great Shepherd and gather the lambs in his bosom, feed them with the sincere milk of the Word and give them the shelter and benefits of the fold. It is ample enough for the lambs as well as the sheep. Their age, inexperience and exposure render it peculiarly necessary for their protection and support. We do not see how a pastor may expect the blessing of God upon his labors who is not zealous for the appropriate administration of the Lord's Supper; neither can we see how any Christian can hope to be fed and strengthened in the graces of piety who habitually neglects this ordinance. It is not left at his own option or convenience whether he receive it or not. It is a duty, as much as prayer, rendered obligatory by the express and positive command of Christ, "This do in remembrance of me."

It is not only a *duty*, but a privilege the most *precious*, both to the pastor and to the people. To take by the hand those who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good and gracious, and lead them to the sacramental board, and carry them back in imagination to Calvary and the Cross, to the nails and the spear, to remind them of all those mysterious sufferings under which the mighty Redeemer sank in the crisis of His agony —thus to commemorate this scene of awe and wonder is to the Christian pastor to stand upon the very mount of God and beneath the outspread wings of the cherubim. Then may he distribute the bread and the wine, and say, "Eat, O friends, and drink, O beloved!"

Pastoral sympathy is another duty implied in feeding the lambs and sheep of *Christ's flock*. Here again the Great Shepherd excels. His heart glowed with the most lively sympathy for those He came to *guide*, *feed* and *bless*. In all their affliction He was afflicted. He mingled His tears with the mourner and felt compassion for the sad and dejected; and in this particular his under-shepherds will find ample occasion in this world of graves and sorrow to imitate His example. They will be called to enter the low hut of poverty, to stand by the bed of the dying saint, to hear the last prayer, the last farewell spoken, to meet affliction in its weeds kissing the cold lips of the dead, to behold Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted because they are not. They will be called to check the moanings of despair, to guide inquiring doubt, to turn the tearful eye of penitence to the light of promise, to lead the weary and heavy-laden to the Cross, where their burdens may be lightened and the aching heart soothed. Oh, how needful that the pastor's heart be full of sympathy, that he may weep with those that weep! Shall they be cold, formal words that gush from his lips and fall upon the mourner's heart? Oh! no; he must feel for that mourner; he

must mourn, too, or his consolation will fall like snow-flakes upon the crushed bosoms and drooping hopes that he would bind up and restore. Shall it be with an inward loathing or secret dread that he enters the home of the poor? No; he must feel that here, too, are his brethren, who need kind words, which will be to *them* like apples of gold in pictures of silver. He must mingle freely with his people—the poor as well as the rich—ascertaining their spiritual wants and trials, counseling the perplexed, strengthening the weak, encouraging the timid and leading the inquiring to the Lamb of God. . . . Thus will he enrich his own mind with lessons gathered out of the volume of human life, blurred, tear-dimmed and torn. Thus will he collect pabulum for the pulpit, and become, if not a more *philosophic*, a more *practical, pious* and *effective* preacher.

Still another duty of the pastor is to *govern* his flock. . . . Here, as in every other particular, the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls appears pre-eminent. He is the only King and Head of the Church, and His laws are the only ones which she recognizes as having absolute and full control over the human conscience. Still, He has delegated a certain portion of authority to the officers in His Church, whom He employs as under-shepherds. It is, however, entirely declarative or ministerial. They are empowered not to *legislate*, but simply to declare and apply the laws which He has given; and this is unquestionably a part of the duty enjoined upon Peter when he was commanded to feed the lambs and the sheep of Christ. The term which in the text is rendered *feed* often means to rule. In proof of this, a single example out of many which might be adduced will be sufficient. It is thus written in the second chapter of the gospel by Matthew: "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall *rule* my people Israel. The word which is here translated, and rightly, *rule* is the very same which is employed in our text, and it obviously implies in the latter case as well as in the former exercising authority over the objects whom it respects, as well as using other appropriate means for promoting their best interest A keeper of sheep cannot act faithfully toward the flock entrusted to his care unless he subjects them to such restraints and corrections as are really for their good. They must not be permitted to wander at will. In like manner, a spiritual shepherd cannot act faithfully toward the people under his charge unless he watch over them and, if need be, administer closely and cautiously the discipline of the Church. Such discipline is both designed and adapted to produce the most salutary results. It is in all its parts for edification and not for destruction. There is not a single law of Christ in which His goodness does not appear equally resplendent with His

authority. Nor can anything be more certain than that in proportion as His laws are conscientiously and wisely executed the Church will shine forth in her beauty and strength, as a society separated from the world which lieth in wickedness, as a society devoted to God, beautified with the image of Jesus, and growing up into a state of meetness for the heavenly world. If, then, it be of importance that the Church should display the excellence and loveliness of her distinctive character—that she should be the salt of the earth and the light of the world—it is unquestionably of equal importance that her discipline should be fully and faithfully exercised. The exercise of it is due to her as a collective association, is due to her members individually—is due especially to her youth, the lambs in the flock of Christ. Rules for the proper exercise of this discipline are specified by our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, and in *no* case should they be deviated from or disregarded. In this work will the pastor be assisted by his Session, who are the appropriate legislative and representative body of the Church. "And let the elders who rule *well* be counted worthy of double honor."

The particulars which have now been considered are sufficient to give some idea of the extent and importance of the duty which the text enjoins—a duty which cannot be neglected in any of its parts without peril to the pastor and his flock. He must guide, feed and govern them, and "who is sufficient for these things?' Of personal sufficiency no one, however distinguished he may be for talent, genius, learning or *even grace*, can boast. But while this is undeniable, there is an internal principle which impels every spiritual shepherd in unwearied exertions to feed the lambs and the sheep of Christ. It is the love of Christ constraining him. This is our position —not fear, nor filthy lucre, but *love* must actuate him in all his sufferings and self-denying labors. Every one who knows anything about the human heart knows that love is one of the most efficient and commanding principles by which it can be influenced. What labors, what dangers, what conflicts, what trials it will induce its subjects to encounter and suffer for the sake of the object loved! Of its power numberless examples may be quoted from the romance of real life or the records of Christian heroism. Such was the love of Jacob for Rachel that it led him to account as a single day the fourteen years of hard and painful service that he might gain her as his wife. But this was the love of a mortal for a fellow mortal; how much stronger is the love of the Christian for his Saviour may be seen by a reference to the martyr-ages of the Church. Look to the history of the apostles. Analyze the secret of their zeal, energy and self-denial. No worldly motives were operat-

ing, yet they forsook all, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, were calm and self-possessed in the hour of danger and triumphed amid the flames of martyrdom. Read the simple narrative of the Apostle Paul as given by himself: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Such were the scenes of danger, trial and suffering through which that venerable and heroic apostle was called to pass. And yet he *gloried* in such tribulations. He "reckoned that the sufferings of this present life were not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed in us." And the secret of the whole matter is, *the love of Christ constrained him.* His life is an enigma—a mystery without the admission of this principle. This explains, harmonizes all—makes his life a beautiful offering to the master passion that animated and controlled him. Such must be the love which animates every pastor who undertakes to guide, feed and govern the flock of Christ. Without such love there can be no inducement to enter the pastoral office. Without such love no interest can be felt in the objects for whom the office has been instituted. Without such love the labors and the trials incident to the office will be intolerable. If Christ be not precious to the soul of the pastor, how can he recommend Him to others as the one altogether lovely? To preach an unknown and unloved Saviour is indeed the most comfortless and profitless employment in which a mortal can possibly engage. In the routine of his daily life and duties he will find his burden heavy and his heart sad unless cheered by the love of Christ. No profession involves so much responsibility, care, labor, anxiety, weariness, both of body and mind, as the ministerial, and yet no profession is so poorly paid; and unless sustained by an ardent love for his work, the pastor will become weary in well-doing and sink beneath the pressure of his cares. Oh! he must love his office, its sacredness and responsibility. Its labors, its toils, its conflicts must still be dear to him. He must wear outwardly no ephod breastplate garnished with precious stones, but he must wear one within, even *a loving* heart —a heart warm for God and humanity; and this he must carry unchanged and unsullied through every scene of trial and discouragement until called from his labor to his rest and reward. To an inattentive observer the usual routine of ministerial duty

may appear by no means onerous or oppressive. But perhaps there is no subject in relation to which inaccurate judgment is more common than in relation to this. To feed the lambs and sheep of Christ from week to week, from month to month and from year to year, walking continually before them even as Christ also walked, supplying them with their portion of food in due season, and so adapting the supply to their circumstances as to furnish the babes with milk and the strong men with meat, and further exercising over them a strict and salutary discipline, is a task of overwhelming labor and responsibility. Nor can any man calculate upon performing it with pleasure to himself or profit to others unless he yields his heart to the constraining influence of the love of Christ.

Having thus presented the duties of the Christian pastor and the great principle that should animate and inspire him in all his labors, we are now prepared, in a brief review, to remark, first, How dignified and important is the office of the Christian pastor! He is a fellow-laborer with Christ—an inferior shepherd under the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls —a herald, an ambassador.

> "The legate of the skies! His theme divine,
> His office sacred, his credentials clear.
> By him the violated law speaks out
> Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
> As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
> He establishes the strong, restores the weak,
> Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
> And, armed himself in panoply complete
> Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
> Bright as his own, and trains by every rule
> Of holy discipline to glorious war
> The sacramental host of God's elect."

Such is the pastor's office and work. No higher honor can be conferred upon a sinful worm. It is an office that comes next to the glory of Jehovah; tends natively and mightily to bless mankind, and embodies in its amazing progress the highest interests of the world.

Surely such an office should be liberally sustained. The faithful minister demands, as his office and labors entitle him, the respect, the confidence, the sympathy, the support of those for whose good he consecrates his energies and his time. He is no beneficiary upon the charities of the church. "The laborer is worthy of his hire." He is entitled to an ample support, such as will effectually relieve him from all pecuniary anxiety, from all apprehension of humiliating dependence when constrained by age or increasing infirmity to retire from active service. On the principle of *quid pro quo*, the world is largely indebted to the pulpit. What other single agency confers such liberal benefactions upon mankind? What affects

so essentially all the interests of society? "The pulpit must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand, the most important and effectual guard, support and ornament of virtue's cause." When the pulpit shall be properly appreciated it will not need to beg for a support. It will be seen to be identified with the best interests and hopes of the race.

Our National Sin--Intemperance in England.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY **F. W. Farrar, D.D.** (CANON OF WESTMINSTER), ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL TEMPERANCE LEAGUE, IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 26, 1878.

And He stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.—Numbers xvi: 48.

ON previous Sundays, my brethren, I have endeavored to set before you the universe as a sign of God's eternal power and Godhead, by showing you, first, that its beauty was the seal of the handiwork of its Creator; and then that neither in its illimitable vastness nor in the steady uniformity of the laws which govern it is there anything to shake, but rather very much to strengthen our faith in God. Such truths may be deeply practical if we will make them so—if we will remember that this is the God whose eye is ever upon us—that "this God is our God for ever and ever, and shall be our Guide unto death." And such truths have a deep bearing on the subject upon which, by a national society, I am bidden to speak to you to-day; for if there be one thing that stands out clearly from such a contemplation of the awfulness of God, and yet the love which sent His Son to die for us, it is the guilt involved in the willful depravation of His work—the dreadful consequences which must follow, and which, as a fact, are daily following from the flagrant violation of His laws. Willful sin—a willful sacrifice of duty to self-indulgence, a willful choice of the lower and baser, instead of the higher and nobler, is disastrous to the individual; and pitiable indeed is the shipwreck which it causes to the hope and the happiness of life. But in the case of a nation still more disastrous is the loss, still more overwhelming the shipwreck. Take the history of any nation under the sun. Watch its rise and watch its ruin, and see whether in every instance its ruin has not been the retribution of its guilt. You may not be able to see exactly *why* it was, but you are forced to see that *so* it was. And the secular historian will tell you as emphatically as the theologian, that to every nation under the sun sin has meant, first, weakness, then decay, and lastly destruction. What ruined Judah? In its first stage, idolatry; in its second stage, Pharisaism. What sapped the strength of Greece? Sensuality. What broke the iron arm of Rome? Slavery. What ruined Spain? Avarice. What ruined Venice? Pride. What ruined the Papacy? Ambition. If ever England is ruined, what will be her ruin? Her national sin, whatever that sin may be. And what is the national sin of England?

Alas! there are many sins in England; but ask the unbiassed opinion of those who know; ask the unsuspected testimony of English judges; ask the exceptional experience of the English clergy; ask the unguarded admissions of the English Press and their unanimous answer would be, I think, as would be the unanimous answer of every thoughtful man in this vast assembly: "The national sin of England is drunkenness, and the national curse of England is drink."

My brethren, it has been my duty once or twice to speak of intemperance, and I am willing to bear the penalty. On this subject it is an imperious duty that the pulpit should not always be silent. But if I am not afraid to speak the truth I do earnestly desire to speak the truth only, and to speak the truth in love. Far from the sanctity of this place be vulgar exaggeration. This abbey, as it is dedicated to God, is sacred to truth. This abbey, as it is dedicated to faith, is sacred to charity. Were I to say from this place one word that was unwarrantable, it would seem to me as though the immortal spirits of the great men whose memorials stand thick around us were frowning on me in disdain; but they would have still more cause to frown if I glazed over the truth with lies. To exaggerate is one thing: to be charged with exaggeration is very much another. Alas! there are aspects of this matter which it is impossible to exaggerate; and though I shall touch only on facts admitted and undeniable, the worse facts are too bad to be here spoken of. And if there be any here who are concerned in the maintenance of a trade from which flow such dangerous consequences, while I do ask them to think over their responsibility, and of that strict and solemn account which we must all one day give before the judgment seat of Christ, they may rest assured that I speak of systems, and not of individuals; and as I never have said, so neither now will I say, one word which is meant to reflect painfully on them. But knowing as we do that drunkenness is a ruinous vice, and seeing as we do that the results which flow from it are of the darkest and most appalling character, I, therefore, desire to arrest—more and more to arrest—so far as I can, the attention of the people of England to this crying and wide-wasting evil. To the intemperate I am not speaking, though from my very soul I pity them; nor to abstainers am I speaking, for to them I can say nothing new; but I do want every Englishman and Englishwoman in this great abbey—every English-speaking man and woman whom in any form or by any means these words can reach—to face the stern facts which I shall touch upon, to ask themselves how far they mean to be entangled in responsibility for them, and how long they will, and why they will, look on such facts unmoved. How weak, alas! are poor human words! how timid are poor human hearts! But, oh, if that great angel of the Apocalypse could speak, and if his

voice were in the thunder's mouth, he could not speak too loud to warn England of the sin and misery which are in the midst of her, to urge her to shake out of her bosom this burning coal of fire.

"Woe," says Jeremiah, "to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower." The allusions to drunkenness in Scripture and in classical literature are not unfrequent. Yet drunkenness was not the prevalent sin of ancient times; and an ancient Spartan, an ancient Roman or an ancient Hebrew would have stared with contemptuous disgust at the sights which in Christian England are as familiar as a jest. It is not that they were less prone to sin, but they were less pelted with temptation. Southern and eastern nations have never been so intemperate as northern; and ancient nations were ignorant of that deadly spirit which has wrought a havoc so frightful among us. The simple wines of antiquity were incomparably less deadly than the stupefying and ardent beverages of this suffering land. They contained, even when undiluted, but four or five per cent.; whereas the maddening intoxicants of Scotch and English cities contain the horrible amount of 53 per cent. of alcohol. Take but one illustration of the difference between ancient and modern days. Our blessed Lord, when he lived on earth, traversed Palestine from end to end. He saw many a sinner and many a sufferer. He saw the lepers, and healed them. He saw weeping, penitent women, and restored them to honor and to holiness again. There is not the slightest trace that He ever once witnessed that spectacle of miserable degradation, a drunken man, or that yet more pitiable spectacle of yet deadlier degradation, a drunken woman. He who scathed the obstinate formalism of the Pharisee; He who flung into the sea with a millstone round his neck the desecrator of youthful innocence, what would He have said, what would He have felt, if He had heard the cries of women beaten by drunken husbands, if He had seen little children carried into yonder hospital stricken down by their mother's senseless or infuriated hand? Ah! estimate these things as He would have estimated them, and then, for very shame, for very pity, for the mere love of your kind and country, you will not venture then to sneer at those who cannot let these things be.

And, alas! my brethren, but for these spirits England need not be a drunken nation. The day was when she was not a drunken nation. Here, at the very central point of English history, listen to a page of your own history. In the reign of that great king, Henry V., who enlarged this abbey, in his army of heroic victors—the army of Agincourt—drunkenness was deemed an utter disgrace; and King Harry was so impressed with the curse of it that he wanted to cut down all the vines in France. Not yet accustomed, as one has said,

"to pour oil of vitriol on the roses of her youth"—not yet accustomed to apply hot and rebellious liquors in the blood of her children, England at that day might have said to one or other of her then not numerous drunkards—

> "I know thee not, old man; fall to thy prayers,
> How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!
> I long have dreamt of such a kind of man—
> So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane;
> But, being waked, I do despise my dream.
>
> * * * * *
>
> ——And know the grave doth
> Gape for thee thrice wider than for other men."

The great antiquary, Camden, who lies buried in yonder aisle, said that in his day drunkenness was a recent vice; and other writers say that "We brought the foul vice of intemperance from our wars in the Netherlands, as we brought back the foul disease of leprosy from the Crusades." In the bad reaction which followed the Restoration, when people broke loose from Puritan restriction to plunge into abominable license, the evil habit was enormously increased, and many a great statesman, and many a great writer, at a subsequent epoch, shattered his nerves and shortened his life by drink. But it was about 1724, as we are told by the last historian of the eighteenth century, that gin-drinking began to affect the masses of English people, and to spread with the rapidity and violence of an epidemic. "Small," he says, "as is the place which this fact occupies in English history, it was, probably, if we consider all the consequences that flowed from it, the most momentous in that eighteenth century, because from that year the fatal passion for drinking was implanted in the nation." Yes, it is only some 150 years ago that there began the disastrous era of the dram-shop and the gin-palace, and from that era ardent spirits began to madden the brain, to poison the blood and to brutalize the habits of the lower classes. Those poisonous draughts of liquid fire which are at this moment the scathing curse of myriads, which are the fellest and foulest temptations with which our working classes have to struggle, about that time replaced the comparatively harmless wines of ancient days. The Jewish rabbis have a legend that when the first vineyard was planted Satan rejoiced, and said to Noah that he should have his account in the results. And in truth, the wine cup, which poets so extol, has, as Solomon has told us, been the cause of woes enough; but if ever the spirits of evil hailed a potent ally with shouts of triumph, it must have been when that thing was discovered which, regarded as a harmless luxury by the virtuous, acts as a subtle and soul-destroying ruin of the unsuspecting—that thing in the use of which "intemperance, the great murderer of millions, doth creep for shelter into houses of moderation."

But to return to history. Ardent spirits had not been long introduced to England when the grand jury of Middlesex, in a powerful presentment, declared that much the greater part of the poverty, the robberies, the murders of London might be traced to this single cause. Even the morals of the eighteenth century, bad as they were, did not so acquiesce in this public demoralization as we, with our consciences seared with the hot iron of custom, are content to acquiesce. In the year 1736 a strenuous attempt was made to stem the rising tide of shame and ruin. Against the Gin Act, as it was called, Lord Chesterfield, the most polished and brilliant peer of his day, flung his whole influence, alas! in vain. When I quote his words to you, remember you are listening to a professed man of the world, perfectly cool-headed, the mirror of fashion, the idol of society, yet speaking simply as a patriot from ordinary observation of notorious results. Had he used such language now—had he used such language in the pulpit instead of in the House of Peers, he would have been called an intemperate Pharisee; but he spoke to an age not yet hardened by time to the horrors of dram-drinking. 'Vice, my lords," he said, "is not properly to be taxed, but to be suppressed. Luxury, my lords, may very properly be taxed; but the use of those things which are simply hurtful—hurtful in their own nature and in every degree, is to be prohibited. If these liquors are so delicious that the people are tempted to their own destruction, let us at length, my lords, secure them from these fatal draughts by bursting the vials that contain them. Let us check these artists in slaughter who have reconciled their countrymen to sickness and to ruin, and who spread over the pitfalls of debauchery such baits as cannot be resisted. When I consider, my lords, the tendency of this bill, I find it calculated only for the propagation of disease, the suppression of industry and the destruction of mankind." So spoke, so thought the great Lord Chesterfield of those ardent spirits which, on this very day, will be purchased by hundreds and hundreds of men, of women, of children, in one hundred and forty houses within only a minute or two's walk of this abbey. And he did not stand alone. If you would know what your fathers thought of these things, look at Hogarth's pictures. And if you will not take the testimony of art, take the testimony of science. In the year 1750 the London physicians drew up a memorial to the effect that there had been 14,000 cases of fatal illness attributable to gin alone; and one of the most estimable prelates of that day—Benson, Bishop of Gloucester—wrote: "Our people have become what they never were before—cruel and inhuman. These accursed liquors, which, to the shame of our Government, are so easily to be had, have changed their very nature." And about the same time the entire bench of English bishops protested against this act, as

founded, in their own language, "on the indulgence of debauchery, the encouragement of crime and the destruction of the human race."

It was amid these protests of ruin—it was amid these omens, as it were, from God in the voices of men, that in England the shameful and miserable tale began. You know, or you may know, and you ought to know, how it has gone on. The extent, indeed, of the calamity you do not and cannot know; and that can only be fully known to Him who hears, and not in vain, the sighs and moans that load the air—to Him alone who can estimate the area of wreck and ruin, of human agony and human degradation, which is represented by the fact, that this country spends £150,000,000 a year on drink, and that in this country there are, besides the many who drink, 600,000 drunkards. No; you cannot estimate it. You have not, most of you, even one fraction of the knowledge about it which those have who have seen it. But need you ignore it? Can you live in the midst of facts so ugly, and yet not lift a finger to make them better? Read for yourselves; judge for yourselves. Refute the facts if you can, and would to God that you could, but you cannot. Convince yourself, first, that these things are totally unnecessary; and then do not take our testimony, but get the best you can from every quarter. Health is the most priceless boon of life. Go to our London hospitals and ask how many are brought there by the diseases, by the accidents, by the brutal violences of drink. Pauperism is the curse of cities. Ask Poor-law Guardians how paupers are made; and ask any economist worthy the name how pauperism can possibly be avoided when so much idleness is due to the £37,000,000, at the very least—as much as all their rent—which the working classes spend in drink. Lunacy is one of the worst inflictions on humanity. Ask in any public asylum, if you like, the percentage of it due to drink. Idiocy is one of the saddest phenomena of life. Ask any physician how many idiots are born of drunken parents. Visit our camps and barracks, and there is not one officer who will not tell you that drink is the deadliest curse of our army. Visit our ships and sea-ports, and there is not one captain who will not tell you that drink is the worst ruin of our sailors. Go to any parish you like in town or country, where there are many public-houses and many poor, and there is not a clergyman who will not tell you that drink is the most overwhelming curse of our working classes. Philanthropists sigh over their condition: how can it be otherwise when there is always the maximum of temptation at the exact point where there is the minimum of power to resist it? Here, almost under the shadows of the great towers of our Houses of Legislature, and within bow-shot of this abbey, are streets in which house after house, family after family, is ruined, or rend-

ered miserable, by this one cause. And, oh! how long will our legislature still refuse to interfere? Oh, that we could show to them the misery of the innocent, the imbruting of the guilty, women broken-hearted, children degraded, men lowered to the level of the beasts, holidays changed into a bane, high wages wasted into a curse, the day of God turned into a day of Satan, our gaols filled, our criminal classes recruited, our workhouses rendered inevitable! This it was which made the late Mr. Charles Burton say that "the struggle of the Church, the library and the school were united, and united in vain, against the beer-shop and the gin-palace," and that this struggle was "one development of the war between heaven and hell." Have we not a right to expect—have we not a right to demand—that in this struggle the legislature should take its part?

Look at the statue of that glorious statesman, who there, "with eagle-face and outstretched hand, seems still," as it has been said, "to bid England be of good cheer, and to hurl defiance at her foes." Speaking of the proposal to use Indians against our American colonists he burst into that memorable storm of words which you all have read: "I call upon the bishops," he said, "to interpose the unsullied sanctity of their lawn—I call upon the learned judges to interpose the purity of their ermine—to save us from this pollution. I call upon your lordships to stamp upon it the indelible stigma of the public abhorrence. Again I implore those holy prelates of our religion to do away with these iniquities from among us. Let them perform a lustration. Let them purify this house and this country from this sin." In his burning wrath of moral indignation so stormed, so thundered, the mighty Earl of Chatham when it was proposed to let loose on our revolted colonists what he called the hell-hounds of savage war. But against this hell-hound of savage intoxication the bishops did then, and the judges do now, their very best to interpose. They, at least—our great judges—can estimate, if any can, the connection of drink and crime. Have they failed to estimate it? There is scarcely a single judge upon the bench who has not spoken of it till it has become a common-place of our courts of justice. "It is not from men that are drunk," said one judge, "But from men that have been drinking that most of the crimes proceed.' "The worst is," said another, "that men enter the public house sober and leave it felons." "But for drink," others have said again and again, "not one of these cases would have come before us." "Do away with drink," said others, "and we may shut up two-thirds of our prisons." So they have said. well nigh every one of them, and still the maddening wave of alcohol goes on. And are these judges fanatics? Are they Pharisees? Or is it that they are forced to see what every one of us might see if we chose as a fearful and intolerable fact?

The new year dawned upon us five months ago with all its cheerful prophecies and jubilant hopes; and when it began I thought I would make a record of a few out of those thousands of awful crimes with which drink would blight and desecrate its sacred history. Very soon I paused, sickened and horror-stricken. The crimes were too awful, too inhuman—sometimes too grotesque in their pitiable horror. Other crimes are human crimes, but the crimes done in drink are as the crimes of demoniacs. Oh, that the angel of the nation might blot them out of his record, with such tears as angels weep; to think that Christ, daily re-crucified, in the midst of us, should, from His throne in heaven,

"——See only this
After the passion of a thousand years."

I have some of them written here, but I dare not read them. I dare not describe the least bad, much less tell the worst. These things—these daily incidents of the year 1878 after Christ—Christian men and Christian women, are they unfit for your fastidious ears? Ah, but these things are as they are; and it is not hypocrisy to shrink, with delicate sensibility, from hearing crimes which are going on about you from day to day, while you do not shrink from the fact that they should be done and borne by Englishmen like yourselves; that they should be done and borne by women who might have worn the rose of womanhood; that they should be done and borne by children who once were little bright-eyed boys and girls in our schools, and who, but for drink, might have been as sweet and as happy as yours. And if you are ashamed that these things should be, why do so many do nothing whatever to prevent this mingled stream of crime and pauperism from pouring through the midst of us? Where are these things being done? In savage Pacific Islands? among cannibals? among ancient Pagans, such as St. Paul describes? I declare to you that I find no records of such chronic horrors among them as I find like incidents of common life, items of ordinary news, happening now—happening to-day—happening in the midst of the nineteenth century—happening in Christian England—happening in Liverpool, in Dublin, in Glasgow, in Manchester—happening here under your minster towers. Here, in the very streets hard by, oh, what a tale could I tell!—the husband imprisoned for assaulting his wife; the son in gaol for striking his aged, miserable mother; the father deserting his family of little children; the son dishonoring his home; the man once rich, now ruined; the woman barely snatched from agonizing suicide. And, Christian men and Christian women, you wonder that our hearts are stirred within us when we see whole classes of a country, which should be the very marrow and sinews of its strength, thus given wholly to intemperance. • When will this

indifference cease? When will a nation, ruined by her vice, demand that the temptations to it should be withheld? Sooner or later it must be so, or England must perish. Weigh the gain and weigh the loss, and if you will not do it, God must one day do it for us. But will you, Christian men and Christian women, will you, as lovers of your country, and lovers of your kind—dare you stand up before high God, and lay your hand upon your heart, and say, "One scale of the balance is worth the other"? Will you lay your hand on your heart, and say that these things ought so to be?

I stop at England. The half, alas! is not told you, or hinted to you. The awful guilt remains that throughout all our colonies and dependencies we, the proud race whose flag dominates the seas, and on whose empire the sun never sets—we, wherever winds blow and waters roll, have girdled and are girdling the world with a zone of drunkenness; until, as I think of it—as I think of the "curses, not loud but deep," muttered against our name by races whom our fire-water has decimated, and our vice degraded, I seem to shudder as there sounds on my ears the stern inquiry to our country "These things hast thou done, and I held my peace, and thou thoughtest wickedly that I was such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things that thou hast done;" and that stern menace of prophetic doom, "Shall not I visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not My soul be avenged on such a people as this?"

But, oh, will not some one interfere before it is too late? Once in the camp of Israel there arose a wail of horror and agony: "There is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun." And, quick as thought, the high priest, Aaron, took a censer and put fire thereon from off the altar, and ran into the midst of the congregation, and put on incense, and stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed. Will no one do it now? We are encircled by the immortal memorials of those who fought the slave-trade, and shattered the biblical and other sophisms of its defenders. In yonder aisles are the statues of Wilberforce, and Raffles, and Buxton, and by the western door the liberated slave kneels in immortal marble and by the death-bed of Fox, whose errors are forgotten, and whose genius is ennobled by his championship of that great cause.

> "Oh, God, for a man with head, heart, hand,
> Like some of the simple great ones gone
> For ever and ever by!"

Oh, for some one again with such eloquence as those, and with the same burning enthusiasm to redress the intolerable wrong, and to alleviate the needless miseries of man! Before the clear intellect, before the fiery zeal of such a one the

flimsy sophisms of a pseudo liberty and the perverted pleas of a feeble literalism would melt like tow at the breath of flame. Were it not better thus than to plunge into the heat of party squabbles? Will no one save the nation from multiplying, from legalizing for itself a needless and self-created destruction? Oh, what a crown would such a man deserve! He would deserve a grander monument than Wellington's—a prouder statue than Chatham's self. His name should live when many of those here recorded, and when most of those to follow them, are covered with oblivion's dust. God grant us such a one to stand between the living and the dead, for the plague has indeed begun. They have been dying of it now for two centuries. They are dying now of disease; they are dying by suicide; they are dying by violence; they are dying in hospitals, in squalid garrets everywhere; strong men—miserable women—little children dying so slowly that none call it murder. And if the drunkards cannot save themselves—if with their money they have drunk away their manliness, and with it their sense of shame, their power of will, shall not the nation save them—save them from themselves—save them from their destroying temptation—save their children—save their wives?

We are told that public opinion is not yet strong enough. Then, in God's name, let public opinion become strong enough. Let the working classes, who are mostly affected, take up the question. Let them snatch their order from ruin. Let them cleanse it from its shame. What the senate refuses now it may not, and will not, refuse when a nation knocks at its doors, with righteous and imperious demand, and tells them that they are there to do its righteous bidding. And as for us who are not senators, and whose power is small, let us at least help to form this public opinion. Let us change the national sin of drunkenness into the national glory of self-control. Let us become the Nazarites, as we have been the Helots, of the world. To hope for this has been called extravagant; nevertheless, I do hope for it. If there be in England so many drunkards, there are also 4,000,000 abstainers; and if, with no loss to themselves—if with stronger health and unwasted means, to their own great happiness, and to the example of others, there are 4,000,000 of every rank and position and every degree of intellectual power—I, for one, believing noble things of man as I believe noble things of God, do not see why there should not be many millions. And, oh, if we cannot and will not save ourselves, let us, at least, save our children. If the health and peace of the working classes of this generation is to be a holocaust to drink, let the next be an offering to God. Let us, as Wellington said at Waterloo, have young soldiers. Let every young man in his strength and every young maiden in her innocence and beauty join our

ranks. Let the manliness of the nation spring forward in its own defense; so that by a sense of shame and a love of virtue, if this evil cannot be suppressed by law, let it perish of inanition. If so I see no end to the greatness of England—no limit to the prolongation of her power. But if not, then in all history, and in all individual experience, I see but this one lesson: no nation—no individual—can thrive so long as it be under the dominion of a besetting sin. It must conquer or be conquered. It must destroy it or be destroyed by it. It must strike at the sources of it, or be stricken down by it into the dust.

The Failures of Infidelity; or, Opposition to Christ Unavailing.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY W. B. Stewart, D.D., IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT EDWARD, N. Y., JULY 14, 1878,

. . . *Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him.*—John xii: 19.

THESE desponding words were uttered by the Pharisees in the City of Jerusalem in reference to Christ. It was on the occasion of His grand entry into the city and at the time of the feast of the Passover, and when the city was full of people from all parts of the country.

A short time previous to this grand entry He had performed the noted miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead in the town of Bethany, a village about two miles from the city. Those who had witnessed that noted miracle had spread the news of it in the city, where it seems to have made a profound sensation; and when the people heard of His coming from Bethany to the city they went out in great numbers to meet Him; and when they saw Him coming they were so filled with joy that they cheered and prayed and sung praises to God. Many spread their garments in His way, and others cut down branches from the palm trees and strewed them in the way: and they that went before Him in the grand procession and they that followed after cried with a loud voice, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." The Pharisees had used their utmost endeavors to prevent the people from recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, and when they saw them on this occasion going out in such great numbers to meet Him, notwithstanding all their efforts to prevent it, and especially when they saw their demonstrations of joy on recognizing Him as the long-expected Messiah, they became extremely mortified at their own failure on the one hand, and were filled with intense indignation at the people on the other.

On seeing Jesus entering the city of Jerusalem in triumph they must have felt very much as Haman felt when he led the hated Mordecai in triumph through the streets of Shushan; and having assembled themselves together for mutual counsel and commiseration, they said among themselves: "*Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him!*" The sense in which the word "world" is here used is hyperbolical, and means a great number, or "everybody," as we would say. And when we remember the fact that this

triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem took place at the time of the feast of the Passover, when thousands of Jews, besides the citizens, were present from all parts of the country, the language of these Pharisees cannot be so extravagant after all.

Like the unconscious predictions of Caiaphas, that one should die for the people, or like Pilate's unwitting testimony to His Kingship in his inscriptions over His head on the Cross; an important prophecy seems to lie hidden in these words; for what these Pharisees here affirmed hyperbolically, His friends may now affirm almost literally.

If these Pharisees, who were His most powerful enemies, felt constrained to use such language in their age of Christianity in view of the great number of His followers, with how much greater propriety can we in the present age appeal to His adversaries and say, "*Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing?*" Do you not see that your efforts to stop the progress of the Gospel, or to prevent the people from believing that Jesus is the Messiah, are unavailing? "*Behold the world has gone after Him!*" Everybody is becoming His followers. The nations of the earth are becoming Christian nations!

The important subject, then, to which your attention is respectfully invited is: *The Failures of Infidelity;* or, *Opposition to Christ Unavailing.* In treating this important subject, it is proposed to notice: *First, the progress of the Gospel; secondly, the efforts of infidelity to stop its progress; and thirdly, to show why these efforts have been unavailing.*

These are all important points—points appropriate to the times, and in which every one who reads or thinks or loves information must feel deeply interested.

I. There are three important facts in reference to the *progress* of the Gospel which are admitted both by friends and by foes. They agree, first, that its progress during the first centuries of the Christian era was *rapid* and *extensive;* secondly, that the human instruments employed in its first propagation were *few and feeble;* and thirdly, that it met in its progress with the most *bitter and persistent opposition.* It is also an admitted fact that it did not commence its progress in the dark, nor in an obscure corner of the earth, but in what is acknowledged by all to be the most enlightened age of antiquity, the Augustan age, and in the most populous and polished cities of that age, such as Damascus, and Antioch, and Ephesus, and Corinth, and Athens, and Rome.

The apostles traveled over classic ground and established Christian churches in the land of Euclid and of Cicero and of Pericles. Its first triumphs were made in the city of Jerusalem. Immediately after the ascension of our Lord, His followers, to the number of one hundred and twenty, assembled together

in that city for worship; and, when the day of Pentecost was fully come, three thousand persons were converted by the preaching of one sermon, by one of the apostles, and added to that number. And shortly after the day of Pentecost we are informed that the number of *men* alone was about five thousand; and again, that multitudes of believers, both of men and women, were added to the Lord, all in the city of Jerusalem! But their labors were not confined to the capital of Judea, for, in obedience to their divine commission, they went out in different directions, preaching the Gospel with such wonderful success that in less than ten years from the time when Paul went forth on his missionary tour from Antioch in Syria it was said of him and his companions that they "*have turned the world upside down.*" And it is a fact that in less than half a century from the resurrection of Christ, Christian churches were planted in all the chief cities of the Roman Empire, and that in about three centuries from that time Christianity had become the established religion of that great empire. And from that day to this it has continued to spread from continent to continent, and from island to island, and from ocean to ocean, until the most powerful, civilized and enlightened nations of the earth to-day are Christian nations; and the most powerful, civilized and enlightened *because they are Christian nations.* And thus the Gospel will doubtless continue to progress until the few remaining nations of the earth shall also become enlightened and powerful Christian nations. The population of the Sandwich and Fejee Islands, some 350,000 in number, are now a Christian people, and yet there are those in my congregation to-day who can remember the time when they were all savage cannibals, and I have no doubt there are those here now who will live to see the time when India and China and Japan will also be Christian nations. India even now is under a Christian government. Her Christian Majesty, Queen Victoria of England, is now Empress of India. Already is the Bible translated into the language of nearly every pagan and semi-pagan nation, and the story of the Cross is read to-day in the vernacular tongues of those nations and is fast undermining their idolatry and superstition; and the time cannot be far distant when the tottering temples of paganism that yet remain will fall to the ground, and will be succeeded by the temples of Christianity; and as the friends of Christ we believe that, in view of the progress which His Gospel has already made, we can truly say to His infidel enemies, "*Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world has gone after Him!*"

II. Such are, briefly, the facts with regard to the *progress* of the Gospel; but it would be a great mistake to suppose that it made this astonishing progress without *opposition.* And

such, too, was the nature of this opposition that if our standpoint were the beginning of the first century instead of the latter half of the nineteenth century, and we were required from that point of observation to estimate the probabilities of its success, we would doubtless be forced to the conclusion that it never could prevail. Such, undoubtedly, would have been our verdict, and, with the exception of a few individuals in the city of Jerusalem, such was in fact the verdict of the world at that time. Both the Jewish and the Gentile world then agreed in their opposition to Christ, and in the opinion that His religion never could prevail. Pilate and Herod agreed on that point—Pilate as the representative of the Gentile world, and Herod as the representative of the Jewish world.

The Jewish world was opposed to the progress of the Gospel. The Jewish rulers crucified its Author, but that effort was unavailing, for in three days He rose again from the dead and remained forty days upon the earth. Again, they stoned Stephen to death, killed James with the sword and imprisoned Peter, intending after the Passover to put him to death; but all these efforts were likewise unavailing, for, in the providence of God, they drove the followers of Christ in every direction from the city, and thus unwittingly spread abroad the knowledge of the Gospel. But wherever the apostles went the Jews stirred up the people against them, exerting themselves to their utmost to prevent them from preaching the Gospel; but their efforts were unavailing, for when persecuted in one city they went to another, preaching the Gospel, until thousands of *Jews* even, including a great number of their priests, became obedient to the faith.

Again, the *Gentile world* was opposed to the progress of the Gospel. Polytheism, the religion of the Gentiles, was the great antagonist of Christianity. It was so firmly enthroned in the hearts of the people, and so completely interwoven with all the departments of government, that Christianity was regarded as treason to the State. Polytheism commended itself to the taste of the people. How? By the beauty of its mythology, by its gorgeously attired priests, by its imposing temples, by its jocund festivals, by its stately processions and brilliant ritual. "It placed genial household gods beneath every roof. It animated all nature with propitious deities. Aurora rode upon the beams of the morning, and Iris clothed herself in the melting hues of the rainbow." It formed an alliance with the fine arts, and gave employment to the painter and the poet and the artisan; and, as a matter of course, its satellites and numerous dependants roused all their energies, like the silversmiths of Ephesus, to resist the progress of a religion which would take away both their amusements and their occupation. The mechanics and the artists were filled with

indignation at such a prospect, and cried out, saying, "*Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*"

The foulest slanders, too, were invented and put in circulation against the Christians. *Nero set fire to Rome and charged it upon them.* The ablest writers, such as Celsus, Porphyry and Julian, employed their wit and learning to uphold their sacred and time-honored paganism, and to bring Christianity into ridicule and contempt. They assailed it with a malignity that out-Heroded Herod, and with a cunning that rivaled "the ingenuity of Spinoza, the wit of Voltaire and the ribaldry of Paine"; but paganism, terrified and alarmed at finding all her efforts to prevent the progress of the Gospel unavailing, finally appeals to the powers of government for aid, and then commences a series of persecutions so cruel and so revolting that it makes the heart sick to contemplate them; and yet even these efforts, cruel and desperate as they were, were unavailing. Even the Roman Empire and paganism combined were unable to overcome the simple fishermen of Galilee, but were both conquered by them in return. Paganism in that great empire was overthrown, and on the ruins of its fallen temples was reared that grand, that magnificent edifice which is to-day the glory of the civilized world—the Christian Church.

Such was the general character of opposition to the Gospel from the time of its first publication up to the time of the great Reformation period; and, although the Gospel has had her bitter enemies since that great Reformation period, yet these modern enemies have changed their tactics somewhat. Instead of making their assaults upon the bodies of Christians as in former ages, they have made them chiefly upon their minds and hearts. In this modern campaign infidelity has marshaled all her hosts and gone forth to battle under the leadership of such men as Bolingbroke, and Shaftesbury, and Tyndall, and Huxley, and Darwin, and Spencer, of England; and of Voltaire and D'Alembert and Renan, of France; and of Haeckel and Strauss, of Germany; and of Paine and Parker and Emerson in this country.

Arrogating to itself the panoply of science and perverting the facts of history, infidelity has shrewdly mingled its dogmas with these perverted facts. It has artfully infused its deadly poison into the fountains of popular literature. "Blending its notes with the sweet cadences of poetry and song, it has chanted its vulgar blasphemies in the softest strains of music." Under the garb of fiction and of polite literature, it has stealthily found its way into almost every home in the land! Decorating itself with the charms of wit and of rhetoric, it is shooting forth in every direction the polished arrows of satire and of ridicule and of caricature. Sometimes it even assumes the Christian name and some of the forms of Christian worship, and then,

calling itself a Christian Church, it seeks control of the governments of the land by means of the ballot-box, all with a view to the overthow of popular education, a free press and a pure gospel.

But, notwithstanding all this opposition from these different forms of infidelity, the gospel of Christ is still making progress, and in its onward march is carrying along with it, in this country, our noble public-school system, and everywhere the rights of private judgment, the liberties of conscience and the freedom of speech and of the press. And, blessed be God, we can say to these modern enemies of Christianity, as certain of his ancient enemies said to one another: "*Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him!*"

III. Now, then, here is a grand mystery demanding a reasonable solution. *Why has all this opposition to the Gospel been unavailing?* Why has it withstood the fires of persecution for ages and ages, still going on conquering and to conquer? Two answers to this important question, the Christian's and the infidel's, have been given. The Apostle Paul gives the Christian answer when he informs us that the success of the Gospel is owing not to the power and eloquence of its advocates, but to *the demonstration of the Spirit and the power of God.* No matter how well a Paul may plant or an Apollos may water, *the increase is of God.* In the progress of the Gospel the Christian sees

> "The unambiguous footprints of the God
> Who gives the lustre to an insect's wing,
> And wheels His throne upon the rolling worlds."

The efforts of infidelity to stop the progress of the Gospel have been unavailing because the hand of God is in its progress. This is the *Christian answer;* and this answer is felt to be entirely reasonable and satisfactory.

The infidel's answer, on the other hand, is a failure. He affirms that the progress of the Gospel has been entirely owing to *secondary causes or to mere human instrumentality;* but this answer has always been regarded by an overwhelming majority of the profoundest thinkers as utterly insufficient to account for such a wonderful result. The human instrumentalities employed were entirely too few and too feeble to produce without divine aid such a grand and magnificent effect. *The progress of the Gospel can never be accounted for on mere natural principles or by secondary causes.*

1. The efforts of infidelity in all ages to stop the progress of the gospel have been unavailing, in the first place, because of the *character of Christ, its author.* There is no successful arguing against such a character as that of Jesus Christ. It is absolutely faultless. It is utterly vain and futile to oppose it, or, as the elegant Rousseau says, to compare the son of Sophroniscus

to the Son of Mary. Infidels may denounce him as a fraud, but they can never make the world believe it.

2. Again, the efforts of infidelity to stop the progress of the Gospel have been unavailing because the *evidences of its truthfulness, when fairly examined, have been found to be entirely convincing and satisfactory.* This has been the unbiased verdict of the greatest heads and the best hearts of all ages. Of all those mighty men who have stood foremost in every department of inquiry, the luminaries of their own age and of succeeding ages—the Bacons, and the Lockes, and the Newtons, and the Keplers, and the Washingtons, and the Websters—scarce one has been an unbeliever! The evidences which eighteen centuries have piled up around the cross are *vast, cumulative* and *overwhelming!* So far from being weakened by the lapse of time or the discoveries of the antiquarian or the labors of the scientist, they have, in fact, been greatly *strengthened thereby.* They form, indeed, a bulwark so massive and gigantic that the combined and oft-repeated assaults of skepticism and infidelity have utterly failed to break down or overleap. Voltaire boasted that he would sweep the Christian religion from the earth, and, after he himself had been swept away some of his disciples caught up the broom of his logic as it fell from his palsied hands and have tried to continue the sweeping; but the most that they have accomplished *has been simply to raise a dust*—a dust which may, perchance, have choked and blinded some, but the grand old bulwark of Christianity remains unbroken and unmarred.

After nearly nineteen centuries of trial, our blessed and glorious Christianity abides in her increasing strength and invincible power—the joy of the present and the hope of the future. (Homilist, Vol. XII., page 281.)

On one occasion a certain learned Chinaman was employed by some missionaries in the work of translating the New Testament into the Chinese language. At first the translating of the book had no apparent effect upon the learned Chinaman, but after some time he became somewhat agitated and exclaimed: "*What a wonderful book this is!*" "Why so?" say the missionaries. "*Because,*" says the Chinaman, "*it tells me all about myself.* It knows all that is in me. The one who made the book must be the one who made me." Ah! yes; the learned Chinaman was right. The Gospel of Christ is so perfectly adapted to all the varied wants of humanity that man's reason says that the author of humanity and the author of the Gospel must be one—*must be one and the same Divine Being.*

Again, when a man believes the Gospel and obeys it, in the sense in which it is intended to be believed and obeyed, *he knows it to be true.* He has tested it by his own inward experi-

ence. And this has been the experience of millions and millions for more than eighteen hundred years.

Let the infidel himself embrace the Gospel, and then he, too, will know it to be true. Intelligent people would not continue for almost nineteen centuries to use a remedy that never cures. The charge of stupid credulity has been often made against the Christians, but the fact is that it requires far more stupid credulity to believe the Gospel false than it does to believe it true, or to believe the infidel substitutes for the Gospel, such as pantheism, or positivism, or evolutionism, or modern spiritualism, than to believe the Gospel itself. *Infidelity has utterly failed to overthrow the evidences of Christianity.*

3. Lastly, it is affirmed that the efforts of infidelity in opposition to Christ have been unavailing because of its *utter failure to devise a substitute* for His religion which can answer the inquiries and meet the wants of man's spiritual nature. This is the *grand failure* of infidelity! It does not require much brains nor much learning to ridicule and caricature the Bible, or to find fault with it and make objections. It is much easier to pull down and to destroy than it is to build up, and yet infidelity has not been able even to *stop* the progress of the great edifice of Christianity, much less to pull it down and destroy it; and the reason is, because it has never been able to erect an acceptable substitute in its place.

It is said that one of the disciples of Rousseau had invented a religion which he was quite anxious to see adopted in France as a substitute for the Christian religion, but not making much progress with his substitute, he complained to Talleyrand of his want of success. Talleyrand suggested that it would doubtless help his cause very much if he would allow himself to be crucified and to be buried and to rise from the dead the third day, and then to show to the people the print of the nails in his hands and his feet! If he could do all that, there would not be so many doubting Thomases as to his new religion! So, like the witty Frenchman, we turn upon the infidel and say, if the Gospel is unworthy of our confidence, what have you to offer us in its place that *is* worthy? Paganism will not answer. Natural religion or pure deism will not answer. Spiritualism will not answer. These have all been tried and have utterly failed. The spiritual medium, so-called, is a fraud. Even atheism has been tried—tried in France and failed.

Again, a *mere negation* of the Gospel, however plausible, will not suffice. Human nature demands not only a religion, but also a *positive* religion, a *positive creed.* Infidelity satisfies no yearnings of the human heart on the one hand, nor quells the fears which sin has awakened in the human soul on the other.

Again, God has placed down deep in man's own consciousness and away back of the question of revelation the solemn

fact of future retribution. What, then, if you have proved the Gospel to be a fable! Human nature is not a fable; nor is its deep and irrepressible consciousness of future retribution a fable!

Again, I ask, What has infidelity to offer to satisfy these inquiries and demands of our nature? *Nothing—absolutely nothing!* But infidelity is bound to answer these demands and inquiries of our nature or give up the contest. It has had abundance of time to answer them, but, thus far, has utterly failed. In fact, the infidel has been trying to answer them for more than eighteen hundred years and has not succeeded yet, and the logical inference is that it cannot be done. Now, then, we believe that we have a perfect right to make these demands on infidelity. If we are not to have salvation through faith in Jesus, *as the Christ, the Son of God*, pray tell us what *other* name there is given under heaven whereby we may be saved. If the infidel must tear from our hearts the sweet hopes and consolations of the Gospel, what hopes and what consolations has he to offer us in their place? You doubtless remember the sad story of the mother of Hume. He had persuaded her to give up her faith in Jesus, but when sorrow and afflictions came upon her she found that, with her faith in Jesus, her comforts too had fled. and going to her infidel son, she said: "*My son, you have taken away my religion, now tell me something to comfort me.*" But, alas! he had no comfort to give his poor afflicted mother!

Oh, yes, dear hearer, there is no substitute for the religion of the Bible! The Gospel is our only hope; Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, our only Saviour. "*Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*" Oh, unbeliever! Oh, impenitent sinner! give up your opposition to Christ. Yield your heart to the saving power of His Gospel. Why longer oppose? "***Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him!***"

Concerning Jesus as a Poet.

No. II.*

A SERMON

PREACHED BY **Thomas Armitage**, D.D., IN THE FIFTH AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH, NEW YORK.

Consider the lilies of the field.—Matt. vi: 28.

THE poetic element in Jesus calls for the consideration of some points which, humanly speaking, enter into the moulding of His thought and expression. We fall into grave error as much in losing sight of His proper humanity as when we forget His proper divinity. It is clear enough that, as a man like ourselves, he was thoroughly influenced by all His surroundings—physical, mental and moral. All humanity bows to the truth of Macaulay's remark, "It is the age that forms the man, not the man that forms the age. Great minds do, indeed, react on the society which has made them what they are; but they only pay with interest what they have received." This principle, when applied to ourselves, is what we call the logic of nature; and there is an important sense in which the Son of man was a son of nature too. The Greek poetic classics are filled with figures from cultured life—life which moved among the marble of elaborate sculpture and architecture. But no such exquisite human workmanship enters into the compositions of Jesus. His field of thought is beautifully suggested by the text, "Consider the lilies of the field!"—enter and contemplate the realm of nature. Living nature, humanity and God form the sublime ideal, perspective and background in His teaching.

At Southampton, the parlor-window of Isaac Watts overlooked the river Itchen and spread before him the Isle of Wight in its soft verdure of garden, field and forest. He gazed upon it till the richly-mantled scene melted his soul and drew from him the memorable hymn, "There is a land of pure delight." So when Charles Wesley stood upon the projecting rock at Land's End, two hundred feet above the sea, with the Bristol Channel upon his right hand and the wide Atlantic on his left, the spirit of poetry fell upon him. The ocean raged and roared about the rock, till, overpowered, he created that startling hymn:

> "Lo! on a narrow rock of land,
> 'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand."

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* Sermon No. 1 on this subject appeared in the June number of THE COMPLETE PREACHER.

Analyze the poems of Milton and you will find the elements which made his life and character cropping out everywhere. They tinge his streams of feeling, mould his imagination, cast his figures and throw a signally occult power into his expression. He lived in days of deep purpose and lofty will, of stern struggle and statesmanship, when the conflicts of English liberty were grim but glorious. These stirred his greatness to gallantry and patriotism and left every trait of his character upon his astonishing work. All this is true also of Dante, the gloomy, morbid, proud, but intense Italian. His *Inferno* is but the dark shade, the noxious, sullen melancholy of as unhappy a spirit as ever imprisoned itself in a haggard body. The great Scotch critic says of him, with an inimitable pungency: "It resembled that noxious Sardinian soil, of which the intense bitterness is said to have been perceptible even in its honey. . . . The gloom of his character discolors all the passions of men and all the face of nature, and tinges with his own living hue the flowers of Paradise and the glories of the Eternal Throne."

These cases convey the idea which I wish to express in relation to our Lord, so far as it is proper to apply them. All His utterances carry us back to the land, the day, the scenes in which He lived, embracing their economy, manners and customs, together with the religious sentiments, principles and practices of the Jewish people, and the shades of His own motives, doings and existence. He was thrown into the closest association with all the forms of nature and its phenomena, of history and home-life in Palestine; all His words bear evidence that these affected His mind, as similar things do other minds. His words constantly transport us back into His personal presence, where we breathe silently, re-live His history and listen to His voice again in all its freshness. This is one of the reasons why new beauties are constantly starting up about Him, and why the motions of His mind are constantly reworking their way into current history. As the great poets sing of nature, its rivers and mountains, its vales and hills, its seas and skies, so did He; thereby identifying each sentence which fell from His lips with the spirit of all ages. Let us trace this thought back in its application to what would be called in human parlance the youthful and formative state of our Lord's mind.

All through childhood and youth, in fact during His whole life, excepting a few of its last years, Jesus dwelt at Nazareth, in the northern province of Galilee, a spot of the most remarkable beauty in the Holy Land Through the ridges of Lebanon there runs a waving valley, perhaps a quarter of a mile wide and a mile long, and then spreading into an enlarged basin. On the northern side of this quiet spot ancient Nazareth stood, surrounded by limestone heights of from four to five hundred

feet, surmounted by rounded tops, and decorated on their sides with the foliage of wild shrubs, the fig and the vine, interspersed here and there with fields of rich grain. This most renowned village on the globe, laid nearly twelve hundred feet above the sea, and being sequestered among hills which clustered around it for five hundred feet higher, was reached by steep and narrow mountain paths. On the north of this village, also the amphitheatre in which the town nestled, was a hill, which commanded a wonderful view, spreading out nearly the whole of Galilee to the eye. From its summit could be seen the ridges of Lebanon and the white top of Hermon-Tabor and the mountains of Gilboa, the headlands of Carmel and glimpses of the Mediterranean Sea, the plains of Esdraelon and the hills of Samaria, with the whole landscape beautified by slope and lowland, orchard and upland—a sea of hills and a panorama of villages, among which were Cana and Endor and Jezreel. Probably there is no region on earth where the mountains rise in such harmony to-day, and where they inspire such grandeur of thought, notwithstanding the absence of their ancient culture and the presence of so much that is arid. Hence, Jesus had a peculiar love for them, and for prayer and meditation in their solitary places. There He held communion with Himself, with His Father and with the sublime workmanship of His hands, while He marked them with the grandest event of His career. And, probably, from that high hill, where the map of half the scenes of historic Hebrew poetry stretched before His vision, He drank in the impressions of childhood and youth till the fairy-land beneath became the very poetry of His soul. Then the whole region was covered with the mosaic of flowers. In our months of March and April the whole region was an embroidered carpet of wild productions of every shade and color, from the gayest to the most retiring hues. As the youth of Nazareth roamed from narrow path to narrow path there met His gaze the red tulip, the rock rose, both white and yellow, and scarlet anemone, the pink phlox, the golden cactus and marigold; and these were intermixed liberally with the hollyhock, the salvia, the lily and wild garlic, the wild geranium and mignonette, all blending their brilliant beauty and delicious fragrance together. Added to these came the whole fruit-bearing facility of the land. There abounded in perfection rich clumps of olive-trees and stately palms, plantations of fig-trees intermixed with the orange and the pomegranate, adorned in their white and crimson bloom or bending with their luscious fruit. Vineyard after vineyard decked the terraces, which industry and skill had worked into the sides of the hills, as we see them to-day at Malta or on the banks of the Rhine. And garden after garden, field after field, inclosed by hedges of cactus, were studded by the tangled grape and the tall cypress, the apple and the walnut.

But, as if this were not enough, every twig and shrub and tree was alive with melody. Nazareth being sheltered by the spurs of Lebanon, its atmosphere was pure, soft and mild, and the whole region abounded with streams of fresh water from the cliffs and mountains. Hence, the valley was the home of the gentle turtle-dove and the grave stork and the dancing, crested lark, fluttering over the green acres below and flooding the blue acres above with song. There lived the lively but tiny bluebird, so delicate that it could rest on a blade of grass without bending or bruising it. The willow-wren and the sun-bird, the white-throat and the black-cap, the robin red-breast and the swallow, the hedge-sparrow and the blackbird, and the thrush, all dwelt there together; for Palestine in that day, as in this, had more than three hundred different sorts of birds. They cooed in the groves, and twittered in the branches, and chattered on the house-tops, and flitted among the rocks, and warbled in the sky, and skimmed the hillsides and darted over the meadow, and vied with each other to make the Son of God welcome and happy. And it touched His heart if one fell to the ground, for He knew that His Father's eye followed its fall. In the insect world the drowsy bee and the large, gay butterfly zigzagged about Him in quest of their spicy stores; white flocks dotted the pastures, and herds grazed on the plains, and oxen drew the plow or trod the threshing-floor around the holy village. Now and then the marriage procession swept through its streets by night, to the voice of the pipe and the flicker of the lamp; and day by day He saw the mothers and maidens of the sequestered town visit its fountain with their graceful jars and tall water-pitchers, and, perhaps, many a young Rebecca among them had quenched His thirst. That fountain stood at the northeastern end of the valley, where it stands yet, and being the only one in the place, it is likely that the child Jesus and His mother had gone there in company hundreds of times to draw and drink. The whole country round about seems at one time, in ages past, to have been volcanic, as its ledges are upheaved and tilted, and all its geological strata bear marks of its irruptive outburst and contortion. And its people, like those of all mountain districts, cared but little for art or luxury, but, as agricultural peasantry, braced themselves by the air of freedom to be industrious, energetic and brave. They lived among ethereal dreams; they knew little of the grosser forms of materialism, but moved in a poetic idealism, which informally blended earth and heaven in soul-inspiring and enchanting pastorals. All this brings the youthful Christ before us through a scene of full beauty which no language can describe. He avoided the great cities and centres of population, preferring as a youth the society of humble men and the tranquillity of nature. There He was first taught

in a country home and synagogue the holy law of God and His spiritual worship. There certain wicked townsmen resented His goodness, and dragged Him to a precipice to hurl Him down and kill Him ; and the name of that obscure village was nailed above His head when He was crucified on a tree. We know the beauty and purity of men's discourses upon whose imaginations and consciences such surroundings strike ; how penetrating is their genius, and how calm is their eloquence. And it is through all this that our own sight pierces the prism of a village youth's simplicity. Its poetic life throws the charm of a lyric into His words, which makes them as emerald, and joyful and smiling as the vale of Nazareth, and at once makes this valley as the house of His pilgrimage and the house of the " King's Idyls"—the very cradle of His immortal song.

About the time that Jesus entered upon His public ministry He removed His home from Nazareth to Cana, and later to Capernaum, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where an entirely new order of scene and life was opened to Him. This change drew Him from the privacy of nature to the thronging interests of a dense population. At Nazareth there was no sheet of water, yet, often turning His face seaward from the " brow" of its hill, He had seen the blue Mediterranean, spotted with a sail here and there, on the far-off horizon. Capernaum was on the highway from Damascus to Southern Palestine, where there was a large traffic in foreign goods by caravan ; also a Roman garrison and a custom-house. It was a great market for grain, wheat, barley, rice and millet ; also for fruits —as dates, citrons, grapes, figs and many others—besides being the centre of the great fisheries of the Holy Land. To this day are found grand chiselled blocks of stone, with corinthian pillars, their capitals and pedestals among the ruins. These indicate its former architectural splendor, and show from what material its orders of frieze and cornice and architrave were cut. Its population was all astir, and our Lord was brought in contact with Gentiles as well as Jews there. There He saw in perpetual use the hook and the drag-net, for its waters swarmed with fishing boats, so that within one generation after Christ's death they met the Romans in a naval engagement on the lake, in which eight thousand citizens were slain and forty thousand sold as slaves. There is a delta of marshy land where the Jordan enters the lake, full of reeds and rushes, and through these valleys the winds howl and the storms gather, while the moist heat of the region engenders fever, ophthalmia and sometimes pestilence.

These brief sketches of our Lord's places of abode are intended to be fruitful of suggestion to you of the influence which His surroundings had upon His mind and heart, and to

show you the sources from which His poetic soul caught its liquid melody and poured out its lyrical effusions, instead of casting upon men the bare truth in a russet dress. Wherever He went He displayed this characteristic of mind, as well in His missionary tours, after entering on His ministry, as in the days of His minority when He made His annual pilgrimages with the mountain peasantry to Jerusalem, the metropolis, to celebrate the holy festivals of the nation. This was a journey of three days across narrow, sombre valleys and over hill and desert, as well as by dark and melancholy streams from the rocks, which objects kept His soul alive at every foot of the way, awakening all sorts of holy memories and sweet histories, and making the defiles echo with the music of His soft songs and light heart. He collected each ray of beauty from every quarter and condensed it into an immortal conception, showing His mind to be an infinite fountain which opened rills of thought and feeling from every object in creation, and startled it into the life of a living soul. To Him the winds had voices, the rock shadows greatness and the inanimate all the breath and fire and pulse of deathless circulation; the sky frowned, the flower preached and the raging waves shuddered into dead calm.

One of the sweetest biblical studies which any mind could pursue would be to trace the conceptions of His mind in their historic order, and to point out His poetic utterances of them in a corresponding imagery as they asserted their authority one after another in His gentle and idylic nature. Yet we may not attempt this, except on a small scale for the purpose of bringing out this thought without vagueness. Take, for example, the words of the text, "Consider the lilies of the field." He dropped these in His sermon on the Mount, and by them paints a perfect picture of God's tender care for nature at one stroke. "They toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The sentence is a poem of grace, purity, trust and beauty in itself. In it you have Nazareth and Capernaum blended, while their enameled meadows mutually glide under your eye and their robed plains stretch before you, where the lily smiles in the freshness of the morning dew. Three distinct visions burst upon your minds First, you are carried back to His quiet home under the roof of Joseph, where you see His lowly mother in her frugal industry plying the distaff, and you hear the hum of the spinning-wheel, while the young child wonders at the twisting thread and the growing web in the loom, the "toiled" and spun. Then your mind is transported, in contrast, a thousand years back in history to the royal palace at Jerusalem, where Solomon is seated on his throne in princely vestments, the tissue of which has

been gathered in all the lands, and the embroidered folds of which have been wrought by the needlework of kings' daughters. And then, again, His climax is reached when He lifts the veil and shows you His Heavenly Father presiding day by day and night by night at the delicate creation of the lily-cup, shaping its lines by invisible fingers, drawing its tints by the forces of nature and arraying its peerless purity in the prisms of star-ray and sunlight; so that every individual of the species excels the splendor of Solomon without the spinning of a fibre or the toiling of a hand in the whole process of the unpretending botanic fabric. You cannot prevent but that this Master-Poet of nature hangs a whole gallaxy of pictures in your mind in this floral similitude of the Mount, and you fairly see the common daisy and buttercup, the wild poppy and anemone tremble with delight as they peer from under the edge of the thorn-bush to hear His great poem on the "flowers of the field."

Examine this point a little further. You may see that the mental law of association was passing Nazareth in memory when He speaks of the man who put his hand to the plow and looked back, or of the servant plowing and feeding cattle; of the sower going forth to sow; of the cockle and darnel mixed with the wheat, and of the angel reaper. The farms of Nazareth opened before Him when He spoke of the hen gathering her brood under her wings to shield her terrified young from the wheeling hawk above them; of the fox which dug a hole in the thicket; of the birds lugging building material through the air for nests in the branches of the trees, and of the shepherd leaving a flock of ninety-and-nine in the pasture while he went up into the mountains to seek the stray one and bring him back with joy on his brawny shoulders. But Capernaum and the lake are in mind when He speaks of the toiling fisher casting the drag-net and drawing in of all kinds, then selecting the good and throwing the bad away; of the traveling merchant in quest of goodly pearls, for which he gives in exchange a whole caravan of costly goods; of the dignitaries in the castles of Philip and Antipas when He discourses of those who wear costly robes and dwell in kings' palaces; of the ravens which sailed over the lake, its cliffs and shore, and were fed daily, though they had neither barn nor storehouse. And when He tells of the weather-wise and the sky-prophets, who cast their eye over the hills by the lake and said in the morning, We shall have "foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering"; but, when they saw a glorious sunset behind its western shore, gossiped about "fair weather to-morrow," yet could not read the signs of the times while they could discern the face of the sky. When He spoke of the house built upon the rock instead of the loose soil or sand, He alluded to Naz-

areth, where the streams from the cliffs sometimes poured down into the valley with such impetuosity; when the fierce winds blew the sea-cloud over the top of Carmel, and the rain descended and the floods came, that the storm swept the loosely-anchored structures away, "and they fell"; so, in order to avoid this, His townsmen dug deeply the foundations of their houses in the rocks, and in all manner of quiet nooks among their peaks and ridges, nitches and edges, they perched their snug dwellings, which gave point to His picturesque song. And as evidently His mother returned to His mind's eye, in her household duties, when He tells of the woman who hid a little leaven in three measures of meal till the family bread was raised. And as He discourses of the beggar by the wayside, the wandering prodigal gone into a far country and feeding swine, and the good Samaritan healing the victim to the brigands, who infested the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, His mind was following the scenes of his various travels. So constantly and endlessly, when He wished to move, or instruct or melt, He throws a great captivating proposition into some isolated figure, clothing it in all the array of the imagination, touching it with a divine glow and fervor, and making a paradox plain by the metaphorical and poetical; so that in His hands grain is grace, the moon is blood, the stars are ripe figs ready to be shaken off; anguish is a worm that gnaws and a fire that burns men or sheep; conversion is a marriage; disciples are stewards and bankers; the world is a vineyard for toil, the Church is a fold for security and heaven is our Father's home for joy and rest. Oh, blessed Lord Jesus, thou thrice blessed Bard from the bosom of God, how rich, how beautiful, how divine thou art!

In closing, I may call your attention not only to our Lord's eloquence of passion, intellect and sentiment, but also to that soft shade of sadness about Him which gives a mild hue and a holy effulgence to all that He said—I allude to His love of the mysterious and His homage to the marvelous. What a babe-like simplicity and an artlessness of undertone mark His conversation with Nicodemus when He insists that a pulse from the divine nature must give new birth to his soul! When He tells him of the unconventional and irresistible breath of God passing over the soul, like winds from the heights piping where it lists, you feel its draughts around your temples and your hair stirs. His mind was full of the supernatural as well as of the natural, the great bond of brotherhood and the infinite spirituality of God, above all other men. His conceptions of all that was holy drew Him into visions of the elevated and meet and tender, which showed that He had communication with the bosom of Jehovah every moment. There was in Him a delicious moral naturalism which pervaded His whole being

with the poetry of the Infinite spirituality; the mysterious and the marvelous were His normal soul-state; so that every motion of His life kept Him in a divine atmosphere and subordinated all His powers to the Divine will, as one who knew the breath of God to be the life of the universe. This made the Word of God His daily food. His great familiarity with the sacred parchments and His deep insight into their spirit showed that the holy books had been the study of His life. Like Timothy, His after-servant, He had acquired the sacred passion at His mother's lap, till, from Moses to Malachi, Hebrew story and song had expended its genius upon Him and enchanted His soul with soft notes from its lyres or bolts from its stormy thunder. Many times He quoted from Moses and David and Isaiah, and other poets of Israel; but none of His citations were more majestic than that in which Jehovah promised Him a footstool on the neck of kings, and none sweeter than that of which the bending of the lake and the blue-belled flax of its shores reminded Him; when He honored Isaiah to express Himself, "A bruised reed He will not break and smoking flax He will not quench." But the Bible poets challenged His love for the great, shadowy phenomena, too, and He tells you of the waters sweeping the terrestrial globe with a flood, and of the blazing conflagration which surged over the cities of the plains, while He predicts upon His own doomed metropolis fire and smoke, war and pestilence, darkness and ruin. All that is simple and sublime, and all that is lurid and terrible mark the slidings of His cadences, with every conceivable gleam of horror and beauty between. Truly this was the Son of God; He spoke the "Omnific Word" in all its scales and syllables. No man spake like this Man, and He spoke with such intuitive unconsciousness as betray His profound conviction that He was the "Word of God" and spoke as became His Word. The one star of heaven ruling both morn and midnight; the one Poet and Poem of divinity from the very bosom of God speaking to the holy ones of all lands, in all voices and tongues, not only filling books which the world cannot contain, but inspiring new songs for all tribes and peoples and eternities to come; for He shall be both the spirit and form of the "new song" which the ransomed shall sing forever and ever! **Amen.**

Under Constraint.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY C. H. Spurgeon, APRIL 28, 1878, IN THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, LONDON.

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.—2 COR. v: 14.

THE apostle and his brethren were unselfish in all that they did. He could say of himself and of his brethren that when they varied their modes of action they had ever the same object in view; they lived only to promote the cause of Christ and to bless the souls of men.

Viewed from some points the apostle and his co-laborers must have appeared to be raving fanatics, engaged upon a Quixotic enterprise, and almost if not quite out of their minds. One who had heard the apostle tell the story of his conversion exclaimed, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad;" and no doubt many who saw the singular change in his conduct, and knew what he had given up and what he endured for his new faith, had come to the same conclusion. Paul would not be at all offended by this judgment, for he would remember that his Lord and Master had been charged with madness, and that even our Lord's relatives had said, "He is beside himself." To Festus he had replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness"; and to Corinthian objectors he gave a still fuller reply. Blessed are they who are charged with being out of their mind through zeal for the cause of Jesus; they have a more than sufficient answer when they can say, "If we be beside ourselves, it is to God." It is no unusual thing for madmen to think others mad, and no strange thing for a mad world to accuse the only morally sane among men of being fools and lunatics: but wisdom is justified of her children.

Every Christian minister ought to be able to use the apostle's words without the slightest reserve: "If I be excited, it is in defense of the truth; if I be sober, it is for the maintenance of holiness; if I seem extravagant, it is because the name of Jesus stirs my inmost soul; and if I am moderate in spirit and thoughtful in mood, it is that I may in the wisest manner subserve the interests of my Redeemer's kingdom." God grant that weeping or singing, anxious or hopeful, victorious or defeated, increasing or decreasing, elevated or depressed, we may still follow our one design and devote ourselves to the holy cause. May we live to see churches made up of people who are all set on one thing, and may those churches have ministers

who are fit to lead such a people, because they also are mastered by the same sacred purpose. May the fire which fell of old on Carmel fall on our altar, whereon lieth the sacrifice, wetted a second and a third time from the salt sea of the world, until it shall consume the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and lick up the water that is in the trench. Then will all the people see it, and fall upon their faces, and cry, "The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God."

Two things I shall note in the text: first, *under constraint;* secondly, *under constraint which his understanding justified.*

I. Our main point will come under the head "UNDER CONSTRAINT." Here is the apostle, a man who was born free, a man who beyond all others enjoyed the greatest spiritual liberty, glorying that he is under constraint. He was under constraint because a *great force held him under its power.* "The love of Christ constraineth us." I suppose "constraineth us" is about the best rendering of the passage that could be given; but it might be translated "restraineth." The love of Christ restrains true believers from self-seeking, and forbids them to pursue any object but the highest. Whether they were beside themselves or sober, the early saints yielded to divine restraint, even as a good ship answers to her helm or as a horse obeys the rein. They were not without a restraining force to prevent the slightest subjection to impure motives. The love of Christ controlled them and held them under its power. But the word "restrained" only expresses a part of the sense, for it means that he was "coerced or pressed," and so impelled forward as one carried along by pressure. All around him the love of Christ pressed upon him as the water in a river presses upon a swimmer and bears him onward with its stream. Bengel, who is a great authority, reads it, "Keeps us employed"; for we are led to diligence, urged to zeal, maintained in perseverance and carried forward and onward by the love of Jesus Christ. The apostles labored much, but all their labor sprang from the impulse of the love of Jesus Christ. One eminent expositor reads the word, "containeth us," as though it signified that the Lord's servants were kept together and held as a band under a banner or standard; and he very appropriately refers to the words of the Church in the Song, "His banner over me was love." As soldiers are held together by rallying to the standard, so are the saints kept to the work and service of their Lord by the love of Christ, which constrains them to endure all things for the elect's sake and for the glory of God, and like an ensign is uplifted high as the centre and loadstone of all their energies. In our Lord's love we have the best motive for loyalty, the best reason for energy and the best argument for perseverance.

The word may also signify "compressed," and then it would mean that all their energies were pressed into one channel and made to move by the love of Christ. Can I put restraint and constraint, and all the rest, into one by grouping them in a figure? I think I can. When a flood is spread over an expanse of meadow land and stands in shallow pools, men restrain it by damming it up, and they constrain it to keep to one channel by banking it in. Thus compressed it becomes a stream, and moves with force in one direction. See how it quickens its pace, see what strength it gathers; it turns yonder wheel of the mill, makes a sheep wash, leaps as a waterfall, runs laughing through a village as a brook wherein the cattle stand in the summer's sun. Growing all the while, it develops into a river, bearing boats and little ships; and this done, it still increases, and stays not till it flows with mighty flood into the great sea. The love of Christ had pressed Paul's energies into one force, turned them into one channel, and then driven them forward with a wonderful force, till he and his fellows had become a mighty power for good, ever active and energetic. "The love of Christ," saith he, "constraineth us."

All great lives have been under the constraint of some mastering principle. A man who is everything by turns and nothing long is a nobody; a man who wastes life on whims and fancies, leisures and pleasures, never achieves anything: he flits over the surface of life and leaves no more trace upon his age than a bird upon the sky; but a man, even for mischief, becomes great when he becomes concentrated. What made the young prince of Macedon Alexander the Great but the absorption of his whole mind in the desire for conquest? The man was never happy when he was at ease and in peace. His best days were spent on the battle-field or on the march. He could never have been the conqueror of the world if the insatiable greed of conquest had not constrained him. Hence come your Cæsars and your Napoleons—they are whole men in their ambition, subject to the lust of dominion. When you carry this thought into a better and holier sphere the same fact is clear. Howard could never have been the great philanthropist if he had not been stangely under the witchery of love to prisoners. He was more happy in a hospital or in a prison than he would have been at Court or on the sofa of the drawing-room. The man could not help visiting the gaols; he was a captive to his sympathy for men in bondage, and so he spent his life in seeking their good. Look at such a man as Whitfield or his compeer Wesley. Those men had but one thought, and that was to win souls for Christ; their whole being ran into the one river-bed of zeal for God, and made them full and strong as the rushing Rhone. They could no more cease to preach than the sun could cease shining or reverse his course in the heavens.

Now, this kind of constraint implies no compulsion and involves no bondage. It is the highest order of freedom; for when a man does exactly what he likes to do, if he wants to express the enthusiastic joy and delight with which he follows his pursuit, he generally uses language similiar to that of my text. "Why," saith he, "I am engrossed by my favorite study; it quite enthrals me; I cannot resist its charms, it holds me beneath its spell." Is the man any the less free? If a man gives himself up to a science, or to some other object of pursuit, though he is perfectly free to leave it whenever he likes, he will commonly declare that he cannot leave it; it has such a hold upon him that he must addict himself to it. You must not think, therefore, that when we speak of being under constraint from the love of Christ we mean by it that we have ceased to exercise our wills, or to be voluntary agents in our service. Far from it: we own that we are never so free as when we are under bonds to Christ.

We have seen that Paul had a great force holding him; we advance a step further and note that *the constraining force was the love of Christ.* He does not speak of *his* love to Christ—that was a great power, too, though secondary to the first; but he is content to mention the greater, for it includes the less: "The love of Christ constraineth us," that is, Christ's love to us is the master force. And oh, brethren, this is a power to which it is joy to submit; this is a force worthy to command the greatest minds. "The love of Christ." Who shall measure this omnipotent force? That love, according to our text, is strongest when seen in His dying for men. Mark the context, "because we thus judge, that if one died for all." The peculiar display of the love of Christ which had supreme sway over Paul was the love revealed in his substitutionary death. Think of it a moment. Christ the ever blessed, to whom no pain nor suffering nor shame could come, loved men. Oh, singularity of love! He loves guilty men, yea, loves His enemies! Loving poor fallen men, He took their nature and became a man. Marvelous condescension!

Now, we may advance another step and say that *the love of Christ operates upon us by begetting in us love to Him.* Brethren beloved, I know you love our Lord Jesus Christ, for all His people love Him. "We love Him because He first loved us." But what shall I say? There are scarcely any themes upon which I feel less able to speak than these two—the love of Christ to us and our love to Him, because somehow love wanteth a tongue elsewhere than this which dwells in the mouth. This tongue is in the head, and it can therefore tell out our thoughts; but we need a tongue in the heart to tell out our emotions, which have now to borrow utterance from the brain's defective orator. There is a long space between the cool brain and the

blazing heart, and matters cool on the road to the tongue, so that the burning heart grows weary of chill words. But oh, we love Jesus; brothers and sisters, we truly love Him. His name is sweet as the honeycomb, and His word is precious as the gold of Ophir. His person is very dear to us—from His head to His foot He is altogether lovely. When we get near Him and see Him at the last, methinks we shall swoon away with excess of joy at the sight of Him, and I, for one, ask no heaven beyond a sight of Him and a sense of His love. I do not doubt that we shall enjoy all the harmonies and all the honors and all the fellowships of heaven; but if they were all blotted out I do not know that they would make any considerable difference to us, if we may but see our Lord upon His throne and have His own prayer fulfilled: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." He is happiness to us, yea, He is all in all. Do you not feel that the sweetest sermons you ever hear are those which are fullest of Him? We are glad to be in the place of assembly when Jesus is within; for whether on Tabor with two or three or in the congregation of the faithful, when Jesus is present it is good to be there. This joyful feeling when you hear about Jesus shows that you love His person; and your endeavors to spread the gospel show that you love His cause. The love of Christ to you has moved you to desire the coming of His kingdom, and you feel that you could give your life to extend the borders of His dominions, for He is a glorious King, and all the world should know it. Oh, that we could see all the nations bowing before His sceptre of peace! We love Him so much that till the whole earth smiles in the light of His throne we can never rest.

The love of Jesus Christ creates in man a deep attachment to the gospel, especially to the doctrines which cluster around the person of our Lord; and I think more especially to that doctrine which is the corner-stone of all—namely, that Christ died in the stead of men. He who toucheth the doctrine of substitution toucheth the apple of our eye: he who denies it robs our soul of her only hope, for thence we gather all our consolation for the present and our expectation for days to come. A great force, then, held the apostle: that force was the love of Christ, and it wrought in him love to Christ in return.

Now, *this force acts proportionately in believers*. It acts in every Christian more or less, but it differs in degree. We are all of us alive, but the vigor of life differs greatly in the consumptive and the athletic; and so the love of Jesus acts upon all regenerate men, but not to the same extent. When a man is perfectly swayed by the love of Christ he will be a perfect Christian; when a man is growingly under its influence he is a growing Christian; when a man is sincerely affected by the love

of Christ he is a sincere Christian; but he in whom the love of Christ has no power whatever is not a Christian at all. "I thought," says one, "that believing was the main point." True, but faith worketh by love, and if your faith does not work by love it is not the faith which will save the soul. Love never fails to bloom where faith has taken root.

Our last point upon this head is that wherever its energy is felt *it will operate after its kind.* Forces work according to their nature: the force of love creates love, and the love of Christ begets a kindred love. He who feels Christ's love acts as Christ acted. If thou dost really feel the love of Christ in making a sacrifice of Himself thou wilt make a sacrifice of thyself. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." We shall for our Lord's sake count all things but dross for the excellency of His knowledge. Oh, soul, thou wilt have no choice left after thou hast once known and chosen thy Lord. That road leads to wealth, but if it does not glorify Christ thou wilt at once say, "Farewell wealth." That road leads to honor; thou wilt be famous if thou wilt take that path; but if it will bring no glory to Christ, if thou feelest the power of His love in thy soul, thou wilt say, "Farewell honor: I will embrace shame for Christ, for my one thought is to sacrifice myself for Him who sacrificed Himself for me."

If the love of Christ constrain you it will make you love others, for the love of Jesus Christ was a practical love. He did not love in thought only and in word, but in deed and in truth, and if the love of Christ constraineth us we shall throw our souls into the work and service of love; we shall be really at work for men, giving alms of our substance, enduring our measure of suffering, and making it clear that our Christianity is not mere talk, but downright work; we shall be like the bullock of the burnt offering, laid upon the altar wholly to be consumed; we shall consider nothing but how we can most completely be eaten up with the zeal of God's house, how without the reserve of one single faculty we may be entirely consumed in the service of our Lord and Master.

II. THE CONSTRAINT OF WHICH WE HAVE SPOKEN WAS JUSTIFIED BY THE APOSTLE'S UNDERSTANDING. "The love of Christ constraineth us; *because we thus judge.*" Love is blind. A man may say that in the affairs of love he exercises a calm discretion, but I take leave to doubt it. In love to Christ, however, you may be carried right away and be as blind as you like, and yet you shall act according to the soundest judgment. The apostle saith warmly, "The love of Christ constraineth us," and yet he adds with all coolness, "because we thus judge." When understanding is the basis of affection, then a man's heart is fixed and his conduct becomes in a high

degree exemplary. So it is here. There is a firm basis of judgment—the man has weighed and judged the matter as much as if the heart were out of the question; but the logical conclusion is one of all-absorbing emotion and mastering affection as much as if the understanding had been left out of the question. His judgment was as the brazen altar, cold and hard, but on it he laid the coals of burning affection, vehement enough in their flame to consume everything. So it ought to be with us. Religion should be with a man a matter of intellect as well as of affection, and his understanding should always be able to justify the strongest possible passion of his soul, as the apostle says it did in the case of himself and brethren. They had reasons for all that they did. For, first, *he recognized substitution:* "We thus judge, that if one died for all." Oh, brethren, this is the very sinew of Christian effort —Christ died in the sinner's stead. Christ is the surety, the sacrifice, the substitute for men. Oh, sacred Substitute, I am thine, and all that I have.

In the next place, *he recognized union to Christ*, for, said he, "If one died for all, then were all dead," for so it runs, that is to say, the all for whom Christ died, died in His death. His dying in their stead was their dying; He dies for them, they die in Him; He rises, they rise in Him; He lives, they live in Him. Now if it be really so, that you and I who have believed in Christ are one with Christ, and members of His body, that truth may be stated coolly, but like the flint it conceals a fire within it; for if we died in Jesus, we are henceforth dead to the world, to self, to everything but our Lord. We are one with Christ, and what He did for us we did in Him, and therefore we are dead because He died; hence we ought no longer to live in the old selfish way, but should live to the Lord alone.

I close with the following reflection—To be constrained by the love of Christ creates a life heroic, exhalted, illustrious: no, I must come down from such lofty words—it is such a life as every Christian ought to live; it is such a life as every Christian must live if he is really constrained by the love of Christ, for the text does not say the love of Christ *ought* to constrain us, it declares that it *does* constrain us. Men and brethren, if it does not constrain *you*, judge yourselves, that ye be not judged and found wanting at the last. God grant we may feel the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Amen.

v. 3:6 Sept. 1878

The Possible and the Impossible in Our Salvation.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY **Enoch Pond, D.D.**, PRESIDENT OF THE BANGOR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, BANGOR, ME.

Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.—Exod. xiv : 13.
Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.—Phil. ii : 12.

THE first of these directions was given by Moses to the children of Israel on the shore of the Red Sea. God had appeared gloriously for the deliverance of His people from their bondage in Egypt ; He had brought them out with a high hand ; He had led them along under an infallible guidance—a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night—to the place of their present encampment. While resting here for a little space, the Israelites learned that Pharaoh, with a powerful army, was in hot pursuit of them, and was close upon them. What should they do? To flee was impossible ; to resist was desperation. They could go neither forward nor backward ; they could turn neither to the right hand nor to the left. In this dreadful emergency the people began to do what they were wont to do in every trial—they began to murmur against Moses and against God. "They said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us to carry us forth out of Egypt?" But "Moses said unto the people, Fear not ; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show you to-day."

The deliverance of the Israelites from their cruel bondage in Egypt was emblematical—and so it is represented in other parts of the Bible—of the deliverance of sinful men from a greater bondage—the slavery of sin and the bondage of the wicked one. And as, in the progress of their deliverance, the Israelites soon came to a point where they could not help or save themselves—where they were to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord—so there is that connected with the salvation of every sinner which he has no power of any kind to do, which he is never required to do, which he is even forbidden to attempt, in reference to which he is to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. At the same time, there is that connected with the salvation of every sinner which he *can* do, which he alone can do, which he

must do, and do himself, if it is ever done, and he is ever saved.

In addressing you from the Scriptures which have been read I propose to show :

I. What that is connected with the salvation of the sinner which he *cannot* do, which he is never required to do, which he is forbidden to attempt ; and,

II. What that is which he *can* do, which he is *required* to do, which he *must* do, and do himself, if it is ever done, and he is ever saved.

I. First, then, what is the impossible thing which the sinner *cannot* do ? And here, to come directly to the point, let me say, in a word, the sinner cannot possibly make any amends, any expiation or atonement for his past sins. He has already sinned ; the work is done ; and now, to make satisfaction to injured justice, and in this way to save himself, is utterly beyond his power. For aught he can do to make amends, he is a ruined soul.

We know that sinful men, in their folly, have often tried to do this impossible thing. They have resorted to various expedients with a view to make satisfaction, in whole or in part, for their sins. But such attempts have accomplished nothing. They have been altogether fruitless and vain.

Some have tried to make amends for the past by a punctilious observance of *rites* and *forms*. This was the error of the old scribes and Pharisees. By tithing their mint and anise and cumin, and by a rigorous adherence to all the forms of their religion, they hoped to do something toward making satisfaction for their sins, and thus lay for themselves a foundation of hope. And this is the grand error of the Romish Church and of all the ancient Oriental churches at the present day. The good Catholic is very strict to count his beads and say his prayers and cross himself and make confession to the priest, and when he has done all this he *trusts* to it. It is the foundation of his hope. And there is not a little of the same error even in our Protestant churches. How many there are who are careful to perform what is sometimes called the round of religious duties, and then they feel as though they had acquired some merit, had made satisfaction in part, at least, for their sins, and laid the Almighty under some kind of obligation to appear for them and save them ! But there can hardly be a grosser delusion than this, or one of more ruinous influence upon the soul.

Some have vainly tried to make amends for their sins by *tortures* and *penances*, by self-inflicted bodily sufferings. We find this error, like the last, in the Roman Catholic Church. The penances there enjoined and endured are often of great severity, and they are undertaken for the express purpose

of making amends for sin. The same error we also find in most parts of the heathen world. The heathen have often a deep sense of sin, and, knowing no other mode of satisfaction, they resort to self-inflicted tortures and sufferings. Hence you may see one swinging with a hook in his back, another sitting in an ant heap to be tormented by the ravenous insects, and a third immolating his child or throwing himself under the wheels of his bloody idols. But all such endeavors are vastly worse than vain. They aggravate sin instead of expiating it; they serve to swell the terrible amount instead of washing it away.

Persons often think to make amends for sin and recommend themselves to the favor of God by convictions, good resolutions and an outward reformation. This is the almost invariable resort of awakened sinners under the Gospel. Instead of despairing of all help in themselves and going directly to the Saviour, they set about making themselves better and getting into a readiness to come to Him. They make good resolutions; they break off from outward sins; they perform many religious duties; they think it necessary also to endure a certain amount of conviction and distress; and all this with a view to recommend themselves to the Divine favor and prepare themselves to be accepted. But all such endeavors are soon found to be vain, and worse than vain; and the individuals resorting to them either become discouraged and fall back into their former courses, or, despairing of relief from their own performances, they renounce them altogether, and do, what they should have done at the first—flee to Christ and find joy and peace in believing.

Another class hope to cancel their sins and stand accepted before God on the ground of their morality. They know they are sinners to some extent, but they are careful to discharge the relative duties of life; they endeavor to perform more good deeds than bad ones, and they see no reason why *they* should not be accepted. Such persons have no idea of the enormity of sin and of what it deserves at the hands of a holy God; they have no proper conception of their situation and prospects as sinners. Suppose them to be as good as they think they are: how is it possible that their good deeds should cancel the demands of justice, or any part of these demands, against their bad ones? Suppose them to be a great deal better than they think they are; suppose them now to become perfectly good, and so to continue to the end of life: would they be doing meanwhile any more than their duty, and thus be canceling aught of their past debt to justice? Not at all. Their debt, in this case, would be growing no larger, but it would be

growing no less. It would still stand full against them, and, for aught they could do to remove or diminish it, must sink them down forever.

In short, there is no way in which a sinner of our race can make the least amends or satisfaction for one of his past transgressions. He may do what he will, he may suffer what he will, his account of sin remains uncanceled, and he must meet it at the bar of God and bear the just punishment of it forever.

Here, then, is the impossible thing of which I spoke; here is a thing, and one indispensable to our salvation, which no sinner has power of any kind to perform.

And as we have no power to perform this thing, so we are never required to perform it. Nor have sinners under the gospel any need or occasion to attempt the performance of it. *It has all been done for them by the Lord Jesus Christ.* He has made ample amends for their sins; He has made a full satisfaction; He bore their sins in His own body on the tree. His work of atonement was all finished when He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. I repeat, then, sinners have no need to make expiation for their past sins; they are never required to do it; they are even forbidden to attempt it. It is precisely here that they are to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

Having shown what the sinner *cannot* do toward effecting his salvation, I proceed to show:

II. Secondly, what he *can* do, and here, as before, I choose to come directly to the point. Although the sinner cannot make amends or atonement for his past sins, he *can* accept the atonement which Christ has made for him. He *can* let go every other dependence and hope, and set down his sinking feet upon this sure and only foundation which Christ has laid. He is, indeed, *averse* to such a surrender of himself into the hands of Christ. He lacks what is sometimes called the *moral power*—that is, the inclination, the willing mind; and he needs the special influences of the Holy Spirit to overcome the aversion of his heart and make him willing. But all the requisite natural faculties—the ability, the power, in the most proper sense of the word power—he possesses. He can come to Christ and put his trust in Him if he will. Accordingly, he is in Scripture invited to come to Christ; he is exhorted to come; he is commanded to come. All proper motives are used with him to induce him to come. He is threatened with eternal perdition in case he refuses to come. Yea, more than this, he is told expressly, and that, too, by Christ Himself, that the reason why he does not come to Him and receive salvation is that he will not. "Ye will not come to Me that ye

might have life." "How often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not?"

These remarks are designed to show in what sense the sinner is able to come to Christ. He is able in the sense of possessing all the requisite faculties, lacking only the willing mind. They are designed also to show that, in the sense explained, man actually possesses the requisite ability. He cannot make atonement or satisfaction for past sins, but he can embrace that atonement which Christ has made for him. He can come to Christ, trust in Him and receive forgiveness and eternal life.

This whole subject, in both its parts, is finely illustrated by the case of the Israelites on the shore of the Red Sea. They had arrived at a point in the process of their deliverance where they could go no further. Something must now be done for them which they had no power to do for themselves or they were lost. They could not divide the waters of the Red Sea; they were not required to do it; on the contrary, they were forbidden to make the attempt. They were to "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

But when God had interposed and divided the sea for them, now Moses calls out to the children of Israel to go forward. When the sea is divided they *can* march through it; and not only so, they *must* march through it, and do this themselves, or they are not delivered. The mere dividing of the sea will not save one of them. They must obey the Divine command and walk through the opened waters, or the host of Pharaoh will be quick upon them and they will be as assuredly destroyed as though the sea had not been divided.

So the sinner, in the process of his salvation, soon comes to a point where he can go no further. He comes to an insuperable obstacle—a thing impossible to him. He has already sinned; the work is done; and to make the least amends, satisfaction or expiation is utterly beyond his power. But, happily, this impossible thing the poor lost sinner is never required to do. He has no need to do it. It has all been done for him by the Lord Jesus Christ, who has made a full and complete atonement.

But now that the atonement is made it belongs to the sinner to accept it, to embrace it, and build upon it his everlasting hopes. This he can do; this he is required to do. This he must do, or his deliverance is not effected. The atonement alone will not save him, unless he embraces it, no more than the mere opening of the sea would have saved the Israelites had they refused or neglected to pass through the divided waters.

Suppose when the sea was opened and the command was given to the congregation of Israel to go forward—suppose they had treated this command as sinners under the gospel now treat the command to come to Christ and receive salvation. Suppose one had said, "Well, I think we are all safe enough as we are, now that the sea is opened. The opening of the sea will save us, whether we go forward or not." And suppose another had said, "I do not at all like this method of being delivered. I am afraid to venture it. I do not feel any disposition to go through this frightful-looking passage, and how can I get a disposition?" And suppose a third had said, "Perhaps it is not decreed that I shall get over the sea if I attempt it; and if not, it will be vain to make the attempt." And suppose a fourth had said, "There is no need of haste; the sea is opened and we can go through at any time. Let us wait till a more convenient season." And suppose a fifth company had turned their backs upon the opened channel and attempted to ferry themselves over in some other way. Suppose, I say, that these Israelites had treated the command to go forward in the ways here pointed out—and these are the very ways in which sinners treat the commands and invitations of the gospel—what had been the consequence? Why, the consequence had been that Pharaoh and his destroying army had been quick upon them, and not a soul had escaped their hands. And a more terrible consequence will speedily overtake ungodly sinners unless they give up their vain excuses and objections, abandon their refuges of lies and flee to the Saviour. This is their only hope. The Red Sea is fairly divided. The once insuperable obstacle between their souls and heaven is removed. If they go to Him in faith they shall have eternal life; but if they turn away from Him and refuse to embrace Him, better had it been for them if He had never died, or if they had never heard and rejected the blessed calls and invitations of the gospel.

The subject before us will help to explain what has been thought to be an inconsistency in the representations of Scripture and in the preaching of faithful gospel ministers. There are many scriptures, as every reader of the Bible knows, in which sinners are represented as in a lost and desperate condition, in a situation where they cannot save themselves—where, unless help come from some other quarter, they are undone forever. "O Israel, thou hast *destroyed* thyself." "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which *was lost*." On the other hand, there are scriptures in which it is represented that sinners have a work to do in effecting their own salvation—in which they are even directed and exhorted to *save themselves*. Thus

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, says: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." And Paul says in the tent: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Now, what shall we say to these apparently discrepant representations? Shall we say that the Bible is self-contradictory? And shall we say that those who faithfully preach the doctrines of the Bible—preach just as the apostles did—are chargeable also with self-contradiction? This many persons do say; but is it true? We see in this discourse how this whole matter stands. It is true, on the one hand, that every sinner is naturally in a lost condition. He is in circumstances where he cannot save himself. Help must come to him from some other quarter or he is undone forever.

But help has come from another quarter. The Lord Jesus Christ has died for sinners, a full atonement has been made, terms of mercy have been proposed, and they are invited to accede to them and live. And now we come to the point where they have something to do in effecting their own salvation. They must themselves accede to these offers of mercy; they must embrace the provided atonement and build on it all their hopes for time and eternity. This they are justly required to do; this they must do, and do themselves, or the provisions of the gospel will be of no avail to them. Hence, with the utmost propriety, they are exhorted to deliver and save themselves, and to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

Thus we see that both parts of this great subject are true; both are important truths; and when rightly understood they are harmoniously consistent the one with the other. There is no contradiction in the case; and none should ever be charged upon the gospel of Christ.

This subject sets forth the blindness and perverseness of the natural man in the efforts which he is inclined to make for his own salvation. We have seen what is the impossible thing in the matter and what the required and necessary thing; what man cannot do and is never required to do, and what he can do and must do if he is ever saved. And now it is a remarkable fact that just as soon as sinners are enough awakened to feel the importance of doing anything for their salvation they set about trying to do the impossible thing; while the thing which they can do and must do if they are ever saved is the last which they will consent to perform.

The natural condition of the sinner is one of false security and spiritual slumber, in which he does not trouble himself at all about his salvation. But when he is enough awakened to feel the importance of doing anything, the first thing which he attempts is to make some amends, some satisfac-

tion for his past sins. He must do something to recommend himself to the Divine favor, something to improve and better his condition. He will try, if possible, to lay God under some kind of obligation to appear for him and save him. It is this kind of feeling which leads the Pharisee and the Romanist to their rites and forms, and the heathen to their self-inflicted tortures, and the legalist to his outward morality, and the convicted sinner to his good resolutions and his endeavors to reform his life, and it is not, ordinarily, till every other expedient has been tried and found to be fruitless that the sinner consents to give all up and falls down helpless, guilty and lost into the arms of his Saviour, to be saved by Him or not at all; to be disposed of by Him as He shall see wisest and best. This is the point to which he must come if he is ever saved, to which he ought to come at once, but to which, ordinarily, he will not come till he has turned this way, that and the other, and found that this is the only method of salvation. Nor even then would he consent to come here were it not that an influence from heaven is brought to bear upon him to bow his will and break his heart and bring him to the obedience of faith.

Such, then, is the blindness and perverseness of the natural man in the efforts which he is inclined to make for his own salvation—trying to do what he never can do and is never required to do, but is forbidden to attempt; while he is averse to the doing of that which he can do and must do, and do himself, if it is ever done and he is ever saved.

In conclusion, I have some advice to give to awakened, anxious, inquiring sinners. I limit my advice to sinners of this class, because it is to little purpose to give advice to any others.

First of all, then, I advise you to cease at once and forever from all attempts to do the impossible thing of which I have spoken. Why should you labor longer in the fire and weary yourselves for very vanity? Why should you persist in vain endeavors to do what you cannot do, what you have no occasion to do, what you are forbidden to attempt? Why should you pour contempt on the atoning blood of Christ by turning your back on Him and striving to climb up to heaven some other way? No; cease at once and forever from all such vain and fruitless endeavors. The only effect of them will be to affront God, displease the Saviour and grieve away the Holy Spirit.

And while you cease from all endeavors to do the forbidden and impossible thing, begin at once the doing of that which is required. Come right to Jesus. Come just as you are. He knows you are guilty, helpless and lost, and such are the very persons whom He came to save. Such

only are willing to accept of His salvation. Do you ask, How shall we come to Christ? What is meant by the terms here employed? I answer: This coming to Christ is a much simpler thing, probably, than you imagine. It is a much easier thing than you imagine. There is no difficulty about it except in your own hearts. The moment the consent of your heart is gained it is all perfectly easy and the work is done.

In order to come to Christ in a way to be accepted you must be convinced of two things: First, that you are undone without Him, that there is no other help or hope for you; and secondly, that He is an all-sufficient Saviour—just such an one as you need: able, willing and waiting to receive you and bless you with His forgiving love.

With these two great ideas impressed upon the mind—your guilty and lost condition, on the one hand, and Christ's ability and perfect willingness to save you, on the other—you are to commit your sinking soul unreservedly to Him. You are to fall at once into the outstretched arms of the Divine mercy. You are to say from the heart, "Here, Lord, I give myself away."

"Just as I am, without one plea,
Save that the Lord has died for me,
And that He bids me come to Thee,
Here, Lord, *I come.*"

My soul, my life, my all I here commit and consecrate to Thee. I desire to live no longer unto myself, but to Him who loved me and died for me.

And now, why should not every sinner come to this very point and put forth at once this simple but saving act of faith? Is it not reasonable? Is it not right? Does not your own conscience require it of you? Does not gratitude urge it? Does not the Bible demand it? Is not its importance impressed upon you by the worth of your undying soul and by all the preciousness of an eternal salvation? Why then do you hesitate? Why delay?

"Oh, come, ye heavy laden, come,
Christ's instant help implore;
Millions have found a peaceful home,
There's room for millions more."

The Misery of Man and the Mercy of God.

A SERMON

Preached by **Adolphe Monod, D.D.** Translated from the French by J. E. Rankin, D.D., Washington, D. C.

Part II.

For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.—Rom. xi: 32.

This text reduces the doctrine of the Bible to its two fundamental articles: The Misery of Man and the Mercy of God. Last Lord's Day I treated the first part, proving the misery of man. To-day I shall treat the second part, showing the remedy for man's misery in the mercy of God. In order thoroughly to understand this discourse it will be necessary to bear in mind that which has preceded it, and I shall, therefore, begin with a *résumé* of my last discourse.

The theme of that discourse was the first clause of the entire verse: "God hath concluded them all in unbelief." I began by explaining the text, and showed that the thought contained in it might be expressed in the following terms: God has declared that every man in his natural state is a sinner; not that every man is vicious, which could not be said without contradiction in terms, since vice is a distinction, but that every man is in a state of estrangement from God, consisting in the fact that he ought to love God more than anything else, and that in his natural state he does love something else more than God.

I first established these two points from the Scriptures; for, on the one hand, they condense the whole of God's law into a single fundamental precept, to which they subordinate all other duties, even love to our neighbor; namely, that we love God above all things else. And, on the other hand, they prove that, by nature, man loves something else more than God. And this they do not only by isolated declarations, but when taken as a whole, and especially in those passages where they more thoroughly reveal these fundamental principles, as, for example, in the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. In the second place, I established the same two points from reason. For, on the one hand, reason shows God to man as a being supremely lovely both in Himself and in His relations to us as His creatures; relations such that they should control our whole being, and such that unless we love God supremely we revolutionize our whole being. On the other hand, it is only necessary to depict what our life would be if we loved

God supremely to show that the natural man does not so love Him, and that he accords to Him only a cold esteem, reserving his supreme love for some other object—some men for the world, *worldly sinners;* some for the affections, *affectionate sinners;* and some for the conscience, independent of God, and therefore unreliable, *virtuous sinners.* Thus, in the name of reason as well as in the name of the Bible, we concluded with St. Paul that man in his natural state is a sinner.

You, then, whom God granted me grace to persuade that your natural state is sinful, and who cannot recall any period in your life when you were converted—that is, when you turned from one direction to a new one—and are compelled to admit that you are still in your natural state, in your state of sin, you can have not one single moment of peace until you escape from this state, for it is a state doubly wretched—a state of condemnation and a state of misery. It is a state of condemnation in which you are exposed to the just punishment of God because you are sinful, which I shall not attempt to prove, but which, since you have a conscience and a memory, you well know for yourselves. And it is also a state of misery in which you are made wretched by sin, though God does not punish you for it, and in which God Himself cannot make you happy; since He cannot make one be and not be at one and the same time. That is, you cannot be sinners, and therefore opposed to His will, and happy, that is, contented, with that will. Thus, equally sinful and miserable, equally incapable of happiness and unworthy of it, you need to be delivered from the penalty of sin and from sin itself; so that happiness is not possible for you, and what you call happiness is but a mockery of the name. Will you seek for this double deliverance in yourselves? You will soon discover by experience, if you do not find out by reflection, that there you will seek for it in vain. You cannot rid yourselves of the penalty of sin, for you cannot blot out the sin of your first disobedience by a later obedience, which, though perfect, could not be a work of supererogation, nor furnish you a surplus to apply to the past. Nor can you any more deliver yourself from sin itself; for, however determined you may be to obey God hereafter, you are as soil full of malignant weeds which cannot produce wholesome plants. And, says Jesus Christ, the flesh can only bring forth of the flesh—that is, sin cannot produce holiness, nor a sinful will reform a sinful will. So that, having no hope in yourselves, and being obliged to look elsewhere, you cry out in anguish: "Who then will deliver me?" God. He accuses you of a sinful state only to deliver you from it. He "concludes

you in unbelief" only that He may "have mercy upon you." Thus His word assures you. Look at the plan which His mercy has appointed for your deliverance and which this Word reveals to you. I say, which this Word reveals to you. For in this discussion upon which I am about to enter I shall simply present the thoughts of the Bible without seeking the approval of human reason, since it is too evident that in delivering sinful man God would not take counsel with sinful man, and that this plan will be among those "ways which are higher than our ways and those thoughts which are higher than our thoughts." This expression is usually applied to afflictions. But in the prophet's thought it really connects itself with free salvation, and the context leaves no doubt of this.

When I wanted to prove our misery in a state of nature reason could be summoned to add its feeble voice to the mighty authority of God. Reason has its own way of stating the need we have of the gospel, and the signs of divinity which this gospel bears. But when it has done this it has done all its work. Its testimony is exhausted. To-day let it keep silence. Let it listen to what God shall speak and not assume to sit in judgment upon its Judge. And do thou, O Lord, freely display to this assembly thy "foolishness," which is wiser than the wisdom of men, and by which it pleases Thee to save them.

And, in the first place, all the prophets of the Old Testament announce and the gospel begins with proclaiming a dispensation of divine mercy so consoling to sinful men, and which they have so little reason to expect, that it takes to itself the title, the Gospel, or the Good News. The first of these two deliverances which you seek you have. God consents to remit to you the penalty of your sins. He forgives you. Not that the condemnation which your conscience pronounces is not just according to the Bible. Far from abating from it, the Bible, on the contrary, pronounces it with still greater emphasis. For, to cite only a single example, in this chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where, last Lord's Day, we heard it declared that every man is a sinner, it is also declared that every man is without excuse, a position which it proves from the manner in which the corruption of former nations originated. And this demonstration, so far from being taken from the history of nations in distinction from individuals, is applied by St. Paul in his conclusion to every man in particular, because the history of nations is found in miniature in the history of the individual. For, just as the corruption of nations began because they voluntarily shut their eyes to light such as God had granted them, and God was compelled to with-

draw this light and leave them in their darkness, which betrayed them into the most frightful disorders, so, also, every honest man knows that he cherishes sin in his heart because he has willfully quenched the light which God gave him at the first, and compelled God to take from him that light and leave him in that ignorance which has betrayed him into sin. According to St. Paul, it is because of this that every man is a sinner, and has irreparably lost the possibility of "justification by works," that is, life eternal, merited by conduct which is conformed to the law of God.

But now, adds St. Paul, God seeing that no man henceforth could attain a blessed immortality by this first method opened another, different one, and proposed to him "justification by faith," that is, eternal life, as a free gift granted to the sinner. Why? Simply because He is merciful—"justified freely by grace," the pleonasm of St. Paul's, not for any merit or worth in man, but in spite of all his demerit and unworthiness. And how? "By the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." My brethren, let us not wrest the Scriptures. These declarations can have but a single meaning. Jesus Christ suffered in our stead the death which we all deserved. God treats His innocent Son as if He had been as sinful as man is, that He may be able to treat man as if he had been as innocent as His Son. He wishes to remove our sins from us as far as the east is from the west, to cast them into the depths of the seas, to remember them no more, to lift us from a state of condemnation.

It is at this point that I want you to remember that I appeal only to the authority of the Bible. I do not call for the testimony of reason, which, indeed, I could not secure, and which I do not need, because I do not express my own thoughts, but the thoughts of God, nor clothed in my own language, but in the language of the Bible. And should you ask me for some connecting link between the forgiveness of our sins and the death of Jesus Christ; by what strange law divine justice can be satisfied with punishing sin without punishing the sinner; how God can afflict the innocent instead of the guilty, and pardon the guilty on account

of the innocent, I have only one word to answer: *I do not know!* And should you ask of me a discourse in which redemption shall be explained, I should follow the example of that philosopher of antiquity from whom certain persons demanded a definition of God; I should require of you at first a week in which to prepare this discourse; after this week I should ask of you another; after the second, a third, and so on, until I should finally answer that I could never finish it; for the more philosophy meditates upon God the less can it define Him; and the more I meditate upon redemption the less can I explain it.

But, though I cannot explain redemption directly, I have a way of explaining it indirectly. Though I cannot conceive of it in itself and as to what constitutes it, I can conceive of it in some sort by what precedes and what follows it. I can see the peace which it re-establishes. When God was asked by Moses to let him see His glory, and to let His goodness pass before his eyes, Moses knew before God passed that He was to pass; but, while he was passing, Moses did not see, for God had "covered him with His hand." It is the same with redemption. God passes before us, sacrificing His Son for the expiation of our sins. While the sacrifice is in progress we see nothing; God has put His hand before our eyes. But before this sacrifice we see the anguish of the troubled conscience; and after it God takes away His hand and we see the peace which He has restored. Let us be content. Let us not be so unreasonable as to wonder that God has been unwilling, has not been able in our present state, to make all things intelligible to us. A day will come when we shall "know as we are known." At present let us believe God upon His Word; let us accept the good news as news. God proposes to forgive all men, because Jesus Christ has suffered for all men.

But it is in vain that the sinner is delivered from the punishment of sin if he is not also delivered from sin itself. God, therefore, offers us a second deliverance. At the same time that He forgives us, and which is wonderful, by the same means He awakens in our soul the germ of holiness, according to this profound utterance of the 130th Psalm, "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."

The second part of the plan of God's mercy, that which has for its aim the deliverance of man from sin itself—in other words, the bringing of him back to love God with supreme love—is founded upon the principle, divinely simple and suggestive, which may be called the philosophy of evangelical holiness. Love cannot be commanded. It comes into existence, without compulsion, upon the exhibi-

tion of certain attributes which attract it. If a Being appeared to us devoid of these qualities He would not appear lovely to us. We should be able to love Him only as we made ourselves. If, on the other hand, He appeared endowed with these qualities, if He appeared lovely to us, not only should we love Him without effort, but we could not help loving Him. If, then, we sin, if we do not love God, it is simply because we do not know Him ; for if we knew Him we should know that He possesses in the highest degree that quality of all most suitable to attract our love—namely, *great love for us !* " Whosoever sinneth," or " whosoever loveth not," says St. John, " knoweth not God ; for God is love." In order, then, to bring man to love God it is necessary to show man that God loves him. For this purpose God reveals to men His true name, which is Father ; sends to them His Son Jesus Christ, who alone, having always been in the bosom of the Father, has seen God, who alone knows all that is fatherly in Him.

How well did Jesus Christ fulfill this mission, and how impossible to see the Son and doubt the Father's love ! Christ comes ! Three years and a half He talks of the Father ; and all that He says can be put into this single expression : *God loves you.* Then that which He proclaims in His life He demonstrates by His death. And upon the cross He not only says, *God loves you !* but, *Behold how God loves you !*

For, what love can equal that which God manifests for us in the sacrifice of His Son ? When I wish to give myself some idea of it I represent to myself such a sinner as I am at first approaching the judgment-seat of God, calling to mind the sins of his life and the small proportion of them which he can remember, and discovering in them ground for his condemnation a thousand times ; reflecting that, if his heart condemns him, God is greater than his heart, and that his condemnation will be still more severe because God sees in him all the evil which he himself does not see and remembers all that He has forgotten ; hearing, too, those threatenings of the Scriptures, the anticipated decisions of eternal justice, which pronounce penalties upon every transgressor of the law, and which treat as a transgressor of the whole law the man who has broken a single commandment ; overwhelmed with these reflections, full of remorse for the past, full of disquiet for the future, and yet compelled to advance in a despair which increases every step He takes, entering the presence of the Most Holy One, the chief of sinners, and finding, instead of a Judge before whom he dared not lift up his eyes, and from whom in gloomy silence he awaits a terrible sentence, a Father who says to him,

"My son, depart in peace: thy sins are forgiven thee." If by this end his whole existence undergoes a change; if an insufferable burden falls from his heart; if peace and hope re-enter, or, shall I so express it? rush into his soul; if he lifts upon his fatherly Judge eyes in which one knows not whether surprise does not surpass joy itself, will not the first accents which escape from his lips be: "What love, my God, what love!" Ah, well! I say to myself. But the love which God has displayed upon this supposition is tame compared with which He has shown in the death of His Son. Here all that which is tender in His mercy is subject to what is terrible in His holiness. Here, at the same time, I am taught that He shows me favor. I am also taught that His law is so inflexible and my sin so enormous, that He could not desire to show me favor without also caring for justice; that it was not only needful that my debt should be paid, but that He only was able to pay it for me. Here forgiveness is a sacred office, in which His love for the sinner, declared in the absolution of the sinful, stands in contrast with His hatred of sin, declared in the shedding of blood. "What love, my God, what love!" And who, then, is the Victim who sacrifices Himself for me? Is He a man? No, say the Scriptures. Is He an angel? No, say the Scriptures. He is the Son of God, His only Son, in whom He has centered all His love; who was in the beginning with God; who is one with God; who is God. So that the Creator gives Himself for the creature in the person of His own Son. "What love, my God, what love!"

But, finally, why such love? Is there anything in me which has deserved it? Have I only anticipated His love by loving Him? No. He has "first loved me." The secret of His mercy is wholly in His mercy itself. He has had compassion on me merely because it pleased Him to have compassion. He has saved me simply because I was lost! When I was a child "of disobedience and wrath," His "enemy," then it was that He determined to sacrifice His Son for me. "What love, my God, what love!" And yet I do not see the depths of this love. It is a deep that I cannot fathom; but the deeper I go I find only fullness of love. In the depths of it which I see I discover a love which transcends my imagination; and in the depths of it which I am unable to penetrate I have a presentiment of a love which confounds, which absorbs, which astounds all my thoughts. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. "God is love. Whosoever loveth not hath not seen God. But I, when I know

Him—I, when I see Him in Christ, how can I help loving Him? Bought with such a price I am no longer my own, and I give Him my whole heart."

By such a manifestation of the love of God to sinful man Christ would have done all that would be necessary to convert him to love God, if this manifestation had found man's spirit ready to receive it. It did not find it so. The thoughts of God expressed in redemption are so far removed from our human thoughts that they would make no impression upon the human soul were it not for a special preparation to which it is subjected. This demonstration is clear, irresistible; but it is put into a language which is foreign to us, so that it is first necessary that we receive into our hearts an Interpreter. Hence, this Preparer of our hearts, this Interpreter of redemption, is promised to us under the title of the Holy Spirit.

Do not imagine that the promise of the Holy Spirit was for the apostles alone; it was for all Christians, in all time. Among apostolic gifts, that which was necessary for the rapid propagation of Christianity, that which they received for the sake of others, is not needful for us as it was for them, nor is it promised. But, among apostolic gifts, that which was needful for the conversion of their hearts, that which they received for themselves, is as necessary for us as for them, and is equally promised. It is to all men that Jesus Christ says, "God will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." It is in epistles addressed to all the churches that the apostles write: "You have received an unction from the Holy One;" that is, the Holy Spirit. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in you." "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." But if these affirmations, so distinct, left us still in doubt, it would remain no longer after the declaration with which the apostle Peter concludes his discourse on the day of Pentecost, and from which it is plain that he wished to prevent in his hearers the very error which, in your minds, I am now opposing: "You shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you and to your children and to them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." My brethren, when God has spoken let us no longer resist. The Holy Spirit is promised to all Christians.

And do you know who the Holy Spirit is? Let us learn it from the Bible; let us listen without unbelief; let us not enfeeble the force of its expressions; let us no more make our demands and still not listen to what God has clearly promised us. The Holy Spirit is not the reaction of our spirit upon itself in meditation and prayer. The Holy Spirit

is not simply an impression naturally produced upon our spirits by just and salutary thoughts. The action of the Holy Spirit is direct, real, supernatural, exerted upon the spirit of man by a God equally sovereign over our hearts as over our nature, and who can at will give us and take from us our thoughts and feelings; or, to keep more closely to the terms of the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, thinking, willing, loving, acting in the spirit of man. The Holy Spirit is God in man.

The Scriptures attribute to this Spirit many kinds of influences, and especially that of which we have just recognized the need. He shows us the love of God as displayed in the redemption. They represent that the Spirit of God sheds abroad in our hearts the love of God—that is, reveals to us, or better, communicates to us, God's love toward us; that this Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God, reconciled to Him by the death of His Son, since by this Spirit and Him alone can we receive Christ as our Lord, our Messiah, our Redeemer. But listen to the apostle Paul, who treats this doctrine directly in writing to the Corinthians: "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man." You see that the apostle speaks of redemption, and that he says that unaided man has not susceptibility to receive it. "But," he adds, "God hath revealed it unto us by His Spirit." "For we have received the Spirit of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." When, therefore, you have received the Spirit of God you will be able to believe in the redemption and to feel its power. Because the redemption conveys a vivid impression of God's love to you, your heart will of itself turn toward Him, and you will, in your turn, commence to love Him. Then will pass upon you an experience of all things new: new light, new feelings, new tastes, new memories, new hopes; in a word, as the Scriptures represent, "a new life." Then, though obliged yet to keep up a warfare with sin, according to the Scriptures, you will be no longer the slaves of sin, according to the same Scriptures; you will still stumble as you walk the way of salvation, but you will no longer follow that of perdition; you will more and more "abstain from every appearance of evil;" and at last you will belong to those whom the Scriptures call righteous, converted, renewed, the redeemed of the Lord Jesus Christ, the children of God, weaned from this world and ripe for another, knowing how to live and yet ready to die.

Thus God's mercy has left nothing undone for the salva-

tion of the sinner. Man needs a double deliverance ; sinful, he needs forgiveness ; wretched, he needs a change of heart ; and God offers them both in Jesus Christ. He forgives him on account of Jesus Christ, who has suffered the punishment due to his sins ; He changes his heart by showing His love in the redemption which he has been persuaded to believe and submit to by the Holy Spirit.

But in order to avail ourselves of this plan of mercy have we nothing to do upon our own part? or rather, finally, what have we to do? Yes, we have something to do. God, who created us without our agency, will not save us without that agency. Whoever would receive to himself the two graces which Jesus Christ brings—forgiveness and change of heart—must have a certain disposition of the soul which has been termed *faith.* The Scriptures clearly insist upon this and upon this alone. Without multiplying proofs of it, it is only necessary for me to recall two marked illustrations : one in the ministry of Jesus Christ, the other in that of the apostles. When Jesus Christ was solicited by the sick to heal their bodily infirmities, by which He symbolized the healing of the soul, He said to them : " Believest thou ? If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." And when St. Paul was interrogated by the jailer of Philippi as to what he should do to be saved, he replied to him, " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." So that if on one side we may be saved " by grace," on the other we participate in that grace only " by faith."

But what is faith? Learn again from the Scriptures : faith has two significations, according to whether it is regarded in its principle or application. Faith, considered as a principle, is the general conviction that the Bible is the Word of God, and therefore that all which it says is true. This is faith in God. Faith, considered in its application, is the particular conviction that this is true which God has declared in His Word, that we are all lost and may all be saved in Jesus Christ. This is faith in Jesus Christ. The second—that is, faith in Jesus Christ—indeed, is only a consequence of faith in God—is what St. Paul demanded of the jailer of Philippi, and which is *also* demanded of all of us in order to salvation. If you wish a more exact and at the same time a simpler conception of faith you will find it in this expression of the leprous man : " Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean. I am lost ; I cannot save myself ; Thou canst save me. Save me, Lord !" This is faith. The moment you experience this disposition there will be no promise in the Bible which you cannot personally appro-

priate, and Jesus Christ will no longer be *the* Saviour; He will be *your* Saviour.

But how shall one acquire this faith? Must God give it? Yes, for the Scriptures say, "For unto you it is given to believe on Him." Must we idly wait till we attain this faith? No; for the Scriptures say again: "Be diligent; seek the Lord; work out your own salvation." But how can you harmonize two things which seem so contrary? In theory they cannot be harmonized, but in practice they can. You will harmonize them by asking for faith; for by asking you recognize the truth that you need some One to give, and at the same time by asking you seek, you act. Ask, then. Pray for faith. In order to heal you God will ask you only one question, Wilt thou be made whole? Wilt thou believe? Not, Do you desire, do you long to believe? but, Will you? do you will it more than all things else and at whatever cost? Do you will to know the truth? That is, will you, to know the truth, make every sacrifice which God exacts of you?—the sacrifice of your idleness, your negligence, your pre-occupation, your interests, your affections, even your personal opinions and your boasted independence? Will you listen to God in the Scriptures with a sincere determination to accept His testimony whether or not it conform to what you have hitherto believed? Are you willing to be forgiven? Are you willing to experience favor like a vile criminal? Are you willing to be embraced in the same act of forgiveness with robbers, with "the chief of sinners?" Do you will to become holy? Do you will to do all that you shall find required in the Word of God, agreeable or not to your inclinations? To have your own will no more, but to follow only God's will; to give to Him all that you have and all that you are? Do you will—to speak it all in one word—O littleness! O cross of nature!—to renounce yourself? Do you will to be worth nothing, to merit nothing, to know nothing, to count for nothing, to be nothing, to keep back nothing for yourself—nothing, nothing at all? If this is your will, if these are your dispositions, ask God boldly for faith. Do not fear to be too bold, only fear being too little so; for to doubt that God is willing to hear you is to doubt His express promise. If, on the contrary, you do not will this, if these are not your dispositions— But why should I disturb you with discouragements? Ah! if you do not perceive these dispositions within you; if you perceive but the beginnings of them; if you perceive only the desire of them, very well; present to God these beginnings, this desire. Strengthen yourself before Him by the example of that unhappy father who supplicated Jesus Christ to heal his child, and when

interrogated whether he believed, answered, weeping, "Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief!" and who was, nevertheless, not repulsed. Pray in the same manner; if not with full faith, yet with the little faith you have; if not with utter self-renouncement, yet with the little self-renouncement which you have. These imperfect prayers will obtain for you, first, graces as imperfect doubtless as your prayers. These graces will stimulate you to better prayers, which will obtain for you more abundant graces; and so from prayers to graces, and from graces to prayers, you will come slowly into the truth, and will finally reach the way of God's mercy.

My brethren, in this discourse and the preceding one I have unfolded the necessity and the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. If any one is about to reject them, I would first ask him what he rejects. Is it only the form, the language, the arrangement of thought? Each of you is free to reject these, for they come from me. Is it, on the contrary, the foundation of these discourses, the very ideas themselves? You do not believe it true that man is by nature sinful; that he needs forgiveness such as can be secured only through the expiatory death of the Son of God; that he needs a change of heart, which can be wrought only by the Spirit of God; that he is lost, and can be saved only by Jesus Christ—only "by grace" "through faith." If this is what you reject, I want to add one thought: Take pains, at least, to know the case, and to know what you reject. It is not man; it is not the word of man. It is the gospel. It is Jesus Christ, who alone is the gospel. He shows precisely what you reject. A lost man, rejecting God the Saviour, Christ the victim; the Holy Spirit, the Renewer. Here all men agree who ever believed the Scriptures at all. It is the gospel of the Reformed Church of France, the gospel of Calvin, the gospel of Luther, the gospel of Pascal, the gospel of Fénelon, the gospel of *The Imitation*, the gospel of John Huss, the gospel of St. Bernard, the gospel of St. Augustine, the gospel of St. Polycarp, the gospel of St. Paul, the gospel of St. John, the gospel of St. James, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of God! So that if you reject it, though you may be called Christians, and may believe yourselves to be Christians, you are no more Christians than a philosopher who rejects the Platonic philosophy can be a disciple of Plato. What I have preached to you is not my opinion. It is the truth. It is not my doctrine. It is *the* doctrine. It is more. It is the life. If you do not believe it, you abide in death. What do I say? If you do not believe it, what *do* you believe? Who are you? To whom do you belong? Whence

come you, and what do you here? If you should defend yourselves, the very stones of this structure will cry out that the worship which they see you offer here to God is a contradiction. For, not to mention Communion days, when this liturgy—by authority of which you are invited to approach this Holy Table, and which you recognize as true by accepting the invitation—declares you to be "miserable sinners" who have no hope but in the mercy of God; that "Jesus Christ is the real Paschal Lamb that was slain for you," and that you have "need of the Spirit of God to transform you into new creatures;" not to mention this, each Sunday you do not accompany the heart, but only the outward gesture, when I open the services with prayer. For this prayer supposes two parties, the first of whom is represented in my first and the second of whom in my second discourse. When the pastor says aloud, "We acknowledge before Thy holy Majesty that we are poor sinners, born in corruption, inclined to evil, of ourselves incapable of doing good, and that we every day and in multitudes of ways transgress Thy holy commandments: and that we deserve from Thee only condemnation and death"—if you reject my first discourse, you say in a low voice: "I am not a poor sinner, I was not born in corruption, I am not inclined to evil, I am not, of myself, incapable of doing any good thing, I do not daily and in multitudes of ways transgress God's commandments, nor do I deserve condemnation and death." And again, when the pastor says aloud, "We take refuge in Thy grace, and we implore Thee to relieve us of our misery. Have mercy upon us, O God, Father of mercies, and forgive our sins, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Grant us, also increase in us, the graces of Thy Holy Spirit!"—if you reject my second discourse, you must say in an undertone: "As I do not deserve condemnation, so I do not solicit favor. I was not born in corruption. I do not need to be renewed by the Holy Spirit. And as I do not believe that the innocent can suffer in place of the guilty, I do not ask to be forgiven for the sake of Jesus Christ." So that, if you reject this doctrine, you cannot put yourself in agreement with the Protestant Church, nor with the Reformers, nor with the pious souls of the Catholic Church, nor with Christians of all ages, nor with the Church Fathers, nor with the Apostolic Church, nor with the Apostles, nor with Jesus Christ, nor with God, nor with yourselves. You must extricate yourselves in some manner from a position so false; you must either go forward or go backward; either take the thing or give up the name, receive the doctrine or admit you are not Christians.

Oh! ye in this assembly whom God has made thoughtful

through these discourses, employ this seriousness faithfully. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Who shall say that this is not your "accepted time," your "day of salvation," which, if you neglect, will never return; which, if you faithfully improve, will be to you the era of a new life? Forget all human influence, all human impressions. See only two parties—God and yourself. Say to Him: "My God, up to this moment I have believed myself a Christian, but now I begin to see that it has been only in name. I perceive that all is not well with me, that I am not at peace with Thee. Give me this peace, Lord. I will renounce everything else. Wouldst Thou have my property? Take it. Wouldst Thou have my reputation? Here it is. Wouldst Thou have my health? Here is my health. Wouldst Thou have even the objects of my affection? Must I give up friend, father, mother, wife, child? Behold, I accept the sacrifice. Thy will supreme! Thy truth supreme! Thy spirit supreme! First my conversion—'Turn me and I shall be turned.'"

My God, if any one prays to Thee thus, he is not far from the kingdom of heaven. Help him, oh, help him to do what only remains to be done by sending down into his heart the Holy Spirit to urge him, to entreat him to continue the work and conclude it; the Holy Spirit, the heavenly Advocate of truth, without whom no earthly advocate can help being "but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." Amen.

Larger Definitions.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY **Joseph Parker, D.D.**, IN THE CITY TEMPLE, LONDON, ENGLAND.

I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat.—Matt. xxv: 35.

BECAUSE certain people had given Jesus Christ bread when He was hungry, drink when He was thirsty, and clothing when He was naked, and because they had called upon Him when He was sick and visited Him when He was in prison, therefore they were called to enter into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. That is one side of the context. And because other people had omitted to do the whole of these things they were pronounced accursed and sent away into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. That is the other and completing aspect of the case. Then the conditions of entering into the kingdom prepared for good people from the foundation of the world are exceedingly simple, and the conditions upon which people are rejected from that kingdom are, apparently at least, most insufficient and inequitable. Because you have given a loaf to a beggar, thrown an out-worn garment upon the shoulders of some shivering pauper, and have done both things so carelessly as actually to have forgotten that you had ever done them, therefore you may enter the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, and be happy in the enjoyment of eternal life. This, perhaps, you could understand, acknowledging the simplicity of the case, and wondering much concerning that simplicity. But you could not so well and comfortably comprehend the other side of the case—namely, that because a man has not given a loaf or a garment that therefore he should go away into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, and into everlasting punishment, a state typified by the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched. If you read that in the newspaper you would say this is unjust; if any magistrate in England attempted to do anything of this kind the whole country would rise in moral indignation and rebellion against injustice so monstrous and aggravated.

Thus we are brought into a very critical condition of mind in relation to this text. Nothing can be simpler than the terms; there is no long word here within whose tortuous scope men may wriggle and make mistakes and come to false conclusions. This part of the Testament might be cut out as an elementary lesson for young readers. It be-

comes, therefore, of supreme importance that we should really understand this matter, lest some of us should be trusting false refuges in relation to the coming of the kingdom, and others should be so infinitely distressed by a sense of injustice at the very outset as to be utterly discouraged from making any attempts at a lofty and noble life. What is to be done? You have to do here what you have to do along the whole line of the Christian kingdom; if you will do it you are equal to every emergency, triumphant in every controversy, and perfectly at rest regarding the equitability and benevolence of the divine rule of mankind. What you have to do is to enlarge the terms. Observe, I will not have a word changed. I call for expansion of meaning, for the natural development of the words, for enlargement of definition, and then God's providence is illuminated and commended for its justice and nobleness, and for the very necessity of those principles which it elevates and enforces and honors with final and complete vindication. The Christian faith is to take its place amid all the controversies of the times by changing nothing essential, touching nothing vital, but in enlarging its terms so as to comprehend all unsuspected occurrences, all startling accidents, all varieties of the highest and most urgent thinking of the times.

If you take the word *hunger*, you naturally limit it to the demands of the physical appetite. A child will tell you what hunger means; ask your least child who can speak, What do we give to people who are hungry, and the child will say, "Bread." That is only the beginning of the definition, and the difficulty I have with many persons in the study of this divine kingdom is that having got the alphabet you cannot get them into the construction and combination of syllables. They will hang on by the mere alphabet, and therefore what is their Christianity? A rattle of letters, not high, resonant, infinite music. Is the child's definition of hunger correct? It is perfectly correct as far as it goes —but what is hunger? Many a man has risen from a king's feast hunger-bitten, with a thirst unquenchable burning in him. How so? Have the viands been insufficient? Nothing of the kind; the startled table groaned under the load of luxury. Were the wines few or poor? Nay, vintages are poured out through the channels of that banquet-room. What was wanting? Bread for a keener hunger, water for an unappeasable thirst. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine upon the land; not a famine of bread nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the Word of the Lord." We have all been amply satisfied with our morning repast; there is no man here, probably, with a

craving hunger within him which he, at all events, has not the means of appeasing. Yet it is possible that the richest man among us, the man that has left a table loaded that he might return to a table still more laden—it is possible that even such a man may know "the curse of a high spirit, famishing because all earth but sickens it." Now that we are throwing out the meanings thus legitimately so as to take in the whole line of human want, we begin to enlarge the terms of the trial so as to meet the terms of the award.

First, then, in reference to the giving of actual bread—bread as usually understood. Most unquestionably there is a distinct reference to that gift; that is the very basis of the judgment; that is the initial and necessary line of the whole movement; for if you would not give natural and ordinary bread you would not give the higher necessaries to the hunger and the thirst of mankind. Imagine not, therefore, that I am liberating any man from the responsibility of giving natural bread to natural hunger; that must be assumed initially, intermedially and finally; no change, modification, can be allowed there. If you ask me to justify the enlargement of my terms, I justify the enlargement by a reference to your own experience and your own consciousness. The word hunger is variously used in Holy Scripture, as is the word thirst. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Let us visit this man, sitting on his velvet cushion upon his luxurious carpet, with his hand upon a bell which, touched, will bring a hundred servants around him, with pictures, horses and large estates, and gold hardly to be counted. Happy man? Never has one moment's happiness. Satisfied? Burning with an intolerable hunger and thirst. What wants he? You must find that out. He wants one word of love, one assurance of sympathy, one breath of condolence, one prayer of intercession; he hungers to know himself; he says, "I cannot tell what I am, what I feel; I am tormented, distressed; I feel in my heart an aching void." If you would sit down beside that man and break the bread of the kingdom of heaven to him, and give him to drink of the water of which Christ said, if a man drink he shall never thirst again, you would leave that man behind you satisfied, delighted, thankful; you would have come within the sweep of the infinite meaning of this marvelous passage. To satisfy the hunger of men is to be on the way to the approval of heaven.

Let us visit another soul amply supplied with all things material and temporal—a man to whom you can do no favor in the ordinary sense of that term. He has more than he can eat and drink of a physical kind; his house is large

enough, his resources are more than abundant—they are redundant to the utmost plentifulness. If you gave him more gold he would not know that you had given it to him. What can we do for this man? Listen to him. He is the victim of superstition, of narrow notions, of false ideas, of bigoted conceptions, of sectarian sympathies; he is in prison, his soul is in bondage. Reveal the truth to him; show him how little he has yet seen; teach him how to take up his stakes and put them further out, how to lengthen his cords, take in more roofage; give him a peep over boundaries that have already shut him in—what have you done to that man? You found him in prison; you opened the door and sent him into a wide and glorious and incorruptible liberty. We have never been in prison, in the ordinary sense of the term, and therefore I contend we must not have the kingdom of heaven shut up within a few terms that are necessarily limited; we must find for the limited word an illimitable meaning, and thus the kingdom of heaven shall overlap the kingdom of earth, and the greater shall include the less.

If we make a third call, the case will be still more complete. It shall be upon a person who has gone the round of the whole scheme of things in society—a man who has drunk every cup, tasted to exhaustion every enjoyment, who has had men-servants and women-servants, and the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all sorts, gardens and pools of water; who has been in the giddy swirl and riot of conventional happiness; gone through it all and set down the drained goblet with a curse. "What are you, sir?" I say to this man, who has passed the whole round of earthly and sensual delights. He says, "I am sick, sated, nauseated, poisoned." Will you take again the goblet you have set down? Never. What ails thee? Sickness—death. Ah! let me speak to thee: there is another world, a faith-world, where souls live, where Hope rekindles her lamp, where the spirit can be satisfied; where ideas are enlarged and answered by ever-completing revelations—a kingdom thou hast never been in, bread thou hast never eaten, water thou hast never tasted. The King of the fair land sends me to thee, sick one and dead, and says, "Compel him to come in." Wilt come? He says, "Will you take me?" I answer, "I will." He says, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto Him: Father, I have sinned; there is nothing on Thy side to be accounted for, explained or justified; the burden is on me, and on me alone." He goes; his sickness is forgotten; a new and healthy appetite stirs every faculty of his nature. He was sick and in prison—you visited him—so you have

enlarged the number of the guests that throng the house of the Saviour.

I begin now, with these incidents before me, to see that the upshot of this, if ever it came to a great assize, must be very solemn ; for this hunger was no passing appetite ; this thirst was no flake of fire that could be put out with a drop of water ; this nakedness was no exposure of the skin ; this sickness was no affection of the physical functions. It was a hunger of the soul, and a thirst of the spirit, and a nakedness of the whole nature, and the whole head was sick and the whole heart was faint ; and if you can find a man who can answer these necessities and destitutions, you will find a man worthy of a kingdom, be it infinite in measurement, be it lasting as eternity ; you will indeed deserve the "Well done," which is heaven.

The other side of the case is thus abundantly provided for. The difficulty of everlasting punishment is now no difficulty at all, but a necessity. For what would the case be then—who are they that go away? According to the terms set forth in the Scripture before us, as enlarged according to human experience and consciousness, there are people who have done nothing, answered no cry of the spirit, appeased no desire of the soul, healed no affection of the conscience, thrown no light of liberty upon the judgment of men, neglected every one, answered no prayers, heeded no cries, satisfied no wants—my friends, to what can they go? When the solemn answer comes, "To everlasting punishment," the conscience says, "Severe, but right." The hunger of the universe for uprightness and justice is answered and satisfied in that going away. I believe in everlasting punishment. I cannot define it, nor will I have any ordinary human definition thrust upon me. I only know this, that it must be something fearful, beyond the imagination of man to conceive. It is not everlasting because it continues three hundred centuries rather than three hundred days. That is a question of time : everlasting is a quality as well as a quantity. Eternal is more than duration—it is duration forgotten, duration sunk in an agony or delight. Joy has no time, misery has nothing but time.

How large the field of service is—hunger, thirst, nakedness, sickness, imprisonment, destitution of every kind! There is room enough in that field for your talent and mine, and the resources of the individual and the whole commonwealth. Find your corner—work it well. If it be the giving of natural bread, God bless you—it is much needed. If it be the giving of ideas, God bless you—they are the true bread which cometh down from heaven. If it be the giving of sympathy, God bless you—it is wanted, for the sick heart

dies of the poisoned confections of time. It is just the field Christ Himself occupied ; Jesus Christ has written His own history in these words : He did nothing else for three years than what He describes the righteous as having done in these verses—He went about doing good. If the people were hungry He said, "Give them to eat." If they were thirsty of spirit, feeling the keen necessities of the heart, he sat down upon the mountain and opened His mouth and taught them. If they were deluded, victimized, ensnared by temptations, traditions, and if they were befooled and misled by incompetent teachers, He liberated them from their prison of inadequate perceptions and perverted ideas and introduced them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

This leads me to say that no man can occupy this field except in Christ's spirit. It is not an inviting field : no man goes to the hospital for a day of recreation, he goes to teach, to heal, to mitigate pain. No man would go to the lunatic asylum for the purpose of spending a half-holiday. He goes to see if anything can be done, if any poor wretch can yet be saved from the outermost ; and as he goes in the angels sing, "Glory to God in the highest : on earth peace and good will toward men." If you have not Christ's spirit, you soon tire of dealing with the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, imprisoned, miserable. There is nothing in these things themselves to fascinate the taste, to engage the affections, to conciliate the esteem and fire the energy of the human heart. These things are repulsive in themselves ; unless we get the right view they will shock us and affright us and repel us, and we shall seek health and beauty and plenty and freedom, and call these things our delights.

So, then, the case is not so simple as you at first thought it to be. It is not the thrusting a loaf into the hands of a beggar and therefore going to heaven. It is not a sinful life for seventy years, and then calling in some poor wretch off the streets and giving him a goblet of water, and then saying, "There, now, I am going straight up to glory." I thought it must be deeper than that ; I felt that that was wrong. I know it now. What has the Christian teacher done this morning—changed a single word? Not one. Altered the venue? Not for a moment. Re-written the Bible? Not a verse of it. What then? What every Christian expositor and every Christian controversialist must do : then he will take the spoil from mighty kings : he must enlarge his definitions, thrust out his terms to their full signification, and he will find that the kingdom of heaven is wide enough to include all science, all politics, all hunger, all thirst, all misery, all need—that it is a kingdom of kingdoms, as its Lord is King of kings.

The Prodigal's Resolve.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY **T. DeWitt Talmage, D.D.,** IN THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

I will arise and go to my father.—Luke xv : 18.

THIS young man, the son of a rich Jew, was thoroughly destitute. He was hungry and in rags. Seated amid the swine-troughs, perfectly wretched, an idea flashes across him—"I will go home. These are no clothes for a rich man's son to wear. What business is this for a Jew—feeding swine? I can stand it no longer. I will arise and go to my father!" Not waiting to patch up his poor clothes or improve his personal appearance, away he flies. Homesickness gives him a fleet foot. That was a wise resolution. He could not sew up his rags or satisfy his hunger. Satan has a great many herds of iniquity, and he says he will give us large wages if we will only watch them. Liar! Down with thee into the pit! "The wages of sin is death." Satan covers his employés with rags; he pinches them with eternal hunger, and when they are weary of the business and try to get away, he chases them with all the blood-hounds of perdition.

1. I remark that this resolution of the prodigal was made in a disgust at his present condition. If his employer had set him to tending flowers or to training vines over the arbor, or to keeping an account of the pork market, or to overseeing the other laborers, that young man would have never gone home to his father's house. If he had had salary enough to clothe himself even moderately; if he had had salary enough to get on ordinarily, he would have said: "I can get along without these splendid things; I can rough it just as a great many other men have roughed it." If he had had money in his pocket he would never have started home. He would have said: "What do I want of my father, with fifty, a hundred, a thousand dollars in my pocket; what do I want to go home for? I will never apologize to the old man. Besides that, I have one-third of the property coming to me anyhow. Besides, if I went home, I know father would put me on the limits. He would not allow such goings on in the old place as I like to indulge in. Come, my boys, fill high and let's drink again to the good time that's coming." Ah! it was his utter destruction and pauperism; it was the fact that they be-

grudged him even the beans and the "carobs." It was because he had come down to destitution, beneath which there was no lower depth, that he resolved to go to his father. Let me here say that no man ever starts for God until he is persuaded of his famine-struck condition. People say to ministers, "Why do you stand and talk about the lost state of man?" For the reason that unless men are persuaded of it they do not want the gospel. If I come into your house, and you are well, and I talk about powerful medicines and physicians, you say: "That is nothing to me. I have no cough, no neuralgia, no rheumatism. Why do you talk to me about medicine?" But if I come into your house and you feel that you are desperately sick, and unless you get help very soon you must die, as soon as I begin to talk about medicines or a doctor you say, "Bring them quickly or I shall die." Now, if I can convince you that in your natural condition you are lost, that you are sick and diseased by reason of sin from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, then you are ready to hear me while I speak of Jesus Christ, the great Physician, and of the balm that will heal all our wounds.

By every possible simile the Bible sets forth the truth that we are guilty and that there is no help for us, so far as human medicament is concerned. Sin is a red-hot plowshare that turns up Eden, and it has prostrated the whole earth with the exhaustion of death; and unless a man quits his sin and comes to God for salvation he cannot be saved.

Are there not some here to-night who would like to be Christians? You cannot be where you are, down in your sin. Go home! go home! Make some stout resolution, like the young man of my text. A mere whim, a mere indefinite longing, will not amount to anything. The young man of the text did not say, "I will wait until a caravan comes along and I will get a ride." No! With an emphasis that sounded through all the ages, he said: "I will arise and go to my father."

2. I remark further that the resolution of the text was formed in sorrow at his past behavior. It was not a mere physical plight; it was sorrow at the thought that he had so badly treated his father. Oh! it is a sad thing that a son, after having been watched over by a father and educated and cared for, should go away and break that father's heart. "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." That is Shakespeare. "A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." That is the Bible. Oh! have we not treated our Father badly? And such a Father! Three times a day with wonderful regularity He has fed you. Through how many winters He has given you wood

and coal! How careful He has been to see that you had apparel suited to the climate and the changes of the seasons! Who fed you this morning when you arose? Who provided for you to-day as you sat at table? Who has sheltered your household? Who has given you the love of your children? In whose keeping are the departed loved ones of your heart? Who pours golden sunlight by day and by night lights up for you the street lamps of heaven? On whose earth do you walk? At whose fountains do you drink? Whose eye hath pitied you? Whose heart had compassion upon you? Whose hand hath helped you? Whose voice hath called you? Our Father, so lenient, so loving, so generous hath He been. Oh! we have all been cruel prodigals. We have chosen the wilderness to the loving arms of our Father. Have you no confessions to make? Have you no sorrows to express? Have you no pardon to ask for? Have you no resolution to make? Oh! if it had been a stranger it would not have been so wonderful that we turned away from Him. If He had flagellated us unmercifully, if He had turned us out of doors, if He had starved us, it would not have been strange if we turned our backs on such a Father. But no, He has loved us, He has caressed us all our life long. Are you sorry that you have offended? Is there in this audience to-night one man frank enough to say: "Father, I have sinned?" If you do wrong to a friend you are willing to apologize. You say: "I am sorry I said that or did that." Have you ever apologized to God? Can it be that ten thousand times ten thousand transgressions of your life are all uncanceled? If it be so, may God this night have mercy upon your soul.

3. I remark again that this resolution of the text was formed in a feeling of homesickness. I do not know how long the young man had been gone—how many weeks, how many years—from his father's house; but I am very certain from the reading of the passage that he was homesick. It is a very disagreeable feeling. You know what it is. You have been away off, and although you may have had plenty of friends around you and all the circumstances were cheerful, you said within your soul: "I would give the world if I could be home to-night."

Oh! are there not those here homesick for God—homesick for heaven? I read of a sailor boy that came back to see his parents, and he stayed a few days, and his mother importuned him not to go away again, and the night before he went back to sea he heard her praying in the next room. It made him harder than he was before. He went to sea. One bitter cold night he clambered up the ratlines; he was

out on perilous duty. The winds were whistling around him in the darkness, and he heard something that first seemed like his mother's voice, and then seemed like that very prayer, and he trembled in the darkness and charged himself with cowardice, and tried to whistle off the feeling; but all the more it pressed through his soul—the very prayer he heard his mother utter in the next room. And there, amid the ship's shrouds, he cried: "God be merciful to me, a sinner! Oh! if there be mercy for such a wretch as I am, help me! Lord help me!" And I have thought while standing here to-night that perhaps some prodigal in this audience might have coming into his soul the memory of father's prayer or mother's petition long ago uttered, and that prayer might press so mightily upon your soul that you would, this moment, surrender yourself to the Lord who bought you.

4. I remark, again, that this resolution of the text was immediately put into execution. The text says he arose and came to his father. The trouble is that nine hundred and ninety-nine out of the thousand of our resolutions never amount to anything. We do not carry them out. How many of us have, scores of times, resolved upon a Christian life, and yet have not entered it. Here is a man who, twenty years ago, in the time of typhoid fever, said: "Oh, Lord, let me get over this sickness and I will serve Thee all the rest of my life." The fever departed; he is well in the house of God to-night, and yet he has never espoused the cause of Jesus.

A resolution that I will become a Christian next year, or next month, or next week, or to-morrow, or ten o'clock to-night, is worth nothing. The young man of the text is one moment sitting down amid the swine and the husks. Then he says, "I will arise and go to my father," and he starts, starts the very instant; as quick as that he is on his way. Oh! my dear friends, are there not some of you to-night ready to start for heaven? Do you not want to start now? You feel your need of pardon, why not seek it now? You feel that you need a title to heaven, why not get it now? How many have put it off? There are some who say: "I must get my life changed first, and I must get better first, and then I will come." Ah! my brother, you will get worse and worse until you come to Christ. No man yet ever made himself better.

But, says one, "Put it off a little longer and I will come." Ah! that is what one of olden time said: "Go thy way for this time. I will attend to it after a while." Did he? No, he went away and perished. To be almost a Christian is to be no Christian at all. At Amagansett, Long

Island, a vessel came ashore and dashed itself to pieces in the breakers, and the men on the beach threw ropes and shot rockets, and the crew of the wrecked vessel got in a small boat and pulled toward the beach and they came almost to the shore ; but the ropes snapped and they were swamped. Their corpses the next day were tossed upon the beach. They came within a stone's throw of rescue, and yet they perished. Oh ! how many men there are who come almost to the beach of heaven ; they are actually within arm's reach of pardon and peace and salvation, yet right there they are swamped forever. Do you know, my brother, that eternity is at stake in this matter ? You would not risk one hundred dollars on as poor security as you have for your immortal soul. If you lend a man a hundred dollars you take a note for it. If you buy property you take a deed for it. If you build a house you get insurance on it. And yet for your everlasting inheritance you have no title, no promise, no hope. Through the darkness of this night, quick as lightning's flash, your soul may be gone —whither ? whither ? Why will you starve in the desert when you might feast in your Father's house ? God wants you to come back ; the angels want you to come back ; the Church of Christ wants you to come back. God, the infinitely lovely and patient One, leans from His throne tonight and stoops over with every possible entreaty and says, " Come, now, and let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as snow ; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." And then God lifts His right hand and takes an affidavit, saying, " As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ?"

Two young men in England went down to the seashore expecting to embark. They could not bear the restraints of a kind father's house. The father wrote down to Mr. Griffin, of Portsmouth, saying : " My two sons are down in your city. I wish you would persuade them to come back." He found the two boys and persuaded one to go home. The other said, " I won't go home." Then said Mr. Griffin, " I will get you a good place on a very respectable ship." He said, " I won't take it ; I want to be a common sailor, and that will plague father most, and what will break his heart will do me most good." Some years passed along, and one day Mr. Griffin was seated in his study when word came, " There is a man on shipboard in irons awaiting execution who wants to see you." Mr. Griffin did not recognize him. " Don't you remember me ? I was the young man you tried to persuade not to go to sea." " Oh, yes," said Mr. Griffin, " I remember you." " Well," said he,

"I committed the crime of murder. I am going to die, and I thought I would ask you to pray for me before I die." Mr. Griffin, thinking of the old folks at home and of the father whose heart had long ago broken over that wayward son, said, "I will try to get you a pardon." He rushed about by day and by night, from city to city, to the proper authorities, and sure enough, he got the pardon. He moved the heart of the judge by the terrible story of parental suffering, and came in due haste with the pardon, and, as he was coming on the ship, he met the father, who had come down from the country. He had found out that his boy was in trouble under a disguised name, and there Mr. Griffin with the pardon met the father on the dock. They went on board, and the very moment that Mr. Griffin handed the pardon to that wayward son, the same moment the father threw his arms around the wayward boy's neck, and kissed him, and the son confessed his crime and his wanderings, and said, "Father, forgive me if I have broken your heart," and the father said, "I forgive you." The chains were knocked off, and the boy went home free. To-night I come to you with a pardon—the glorious pardon of the Gospel. I put it in your right hand, while at the same moment the Lord God Almighty, your Father, breaks in upon the darkness of your soul and throws the arms of His compassion around your neck, and says, "I forgive you for all your wanderings," and there is joy on earth and joy in heaven. Who will accept the Father's embrace?

The Family in Heaven and Earth.

OUTLINES OF A SERMON

PREACHED BY **William Ormiston, D.D.,** IN THE FIFTH AVENUE COLLEGIATE REFORMED CHURCH, NEW YORK.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.—Eph. iii: 14, 15.

THE apostle in this connection is describing in glowing and magnificent imagery the unity of the Church. In the last chapter he says: "He (Christ) is our peace, who hath made both (believing Gentiles and Jews) one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." He compares the Church to a city in which all inhabitants enjoy equal privileges. Then again, in the luxuriance of his imagery, his mind glowing with the thought of the brotherhood of all Christians, he compares the Church to a temple, every part fitly framed together, and each part essential to the completeness of the whole—a temple in which expiation is made alike for all. Then arises before his mind the thought of the family, where all are brothers, are equals, and he says, in Christ "the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

"For this cause"—because all Christians have equal privileges in Christ, all have expiation made for them, all are members of one family, are brethren—"for this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Bowing the knee indicates the reverence with which we approach God. The introduction, the petition and the peroration are sublime. Our text is the first of these.

I. God is here presented *as a father*. The first conception of family is *fatherhood*. The fatherhood of God! Sublime thought! There is a sense in which God is a father, because He is Creator. The term is not here used in this general sense—"The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Jew spoke of God as father not because He was their Creator, but had redeemed and adopted them and made them in a special way His peculiar people. So has the term father a special significance to the Christian. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii: 14). "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," etc. (1 John iii: 2). We are heirs, not servants, "begotten," etc. The unfathomed depth of meaning in the phrase, Sons of God! Abba is the first word of the newborn. God is the Father of our Lord, and through Him of us.

1. We have the truth impressed upon us that Jesus is the only way of access to the Father. Jesus is His Son, and we are begotten of the Father through Jesus. We speak of being exalted by nature—by the music of the brook, the roar of the cataract; by the fields, the woods, the clouds, the sky. There is but one name given under heaven through which salvation is possible. Jesus, with divine simplicity, says, I am the way and the life.

2. Not only is Jesus our access, but our strongest plea—"*our* Lord," "Father of our Lord;" He is our kinsman.

3. We have here a vision of the greatest privilege we are to enjoy, nearness to our God. Do you not find it difficult, even in the closet at prayer, to feel Him a God near by? We speak of Him as a force, a principle, an enthroned force. Were God nothing more than that to us we would be crushed. We need to realize that He is a person full of the tenderness, the unapproachable love of Christ, who, when in the world, longed to bless at all times and all people. He came to reveal to us the Father. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of the Father. To-day we have His sympathy, the sympathy of a divine Person. What strength this thought imparts! Remember, that all that earthly parentage has ever revealed of authority, of tenderness, of self-sacrifice is being manifested daily in an infinite greater degree in God. "We bow the knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

II. Christians here called *one family*—"of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Some understand by heaven and earth, Jew and Gentile. Those terms, I do not think, are ever used in this sense in the Bible. It means the "just made perfect" in heaven and Christians on earth. It is very probable that the range of the meaning of the text is to be much enlarged so as to embrace all spirits in the universe who are in harmony with God.

Let us examine further this comparison of the Church to a family. 1. The idea of unity in a family does not spring from out of outward organization or harmony of interests or of tastes, or out of affinity. No man enters the family by choice. He is born into it. So must man be born into the Church of Christ. He may join this or that denomination; he may intellectually assent to the creed as a politician accepts a platform; but all this constitute him no member of the family in Christ.

2. While there is unity there is diversity in the family.

3. The family may exist under different forms. The Church which worshipped in tents, then in temples, then as now, is one. It is all one glorious family wherever found, no matter by what name it may be called among men.

"Named." A name often signifies little. There is sometimes no harmony between the name and the object which bears the name. But God never names wrongly, and He it is who names the Christian. The hypocrite is falsely so named. He deceives only man. The unity of Christians is a *reality*. They are by *birth* members of one family.

4. Membership in this family is highest honor.

1. It is an ancient family—patriarchs, prophets, apostles, etc.

2. A numerous family.

3. A united family. Here and there are apparent divisions. These are but on the surface. The Church is united in itself and is united to Christ, the elder brother. The unity is complete. There is one Father and the family is one.

Two questions I would ask in conclusion.

1. Do you belong to this family? Do you bow the knee to the Father? It is no great stretch of charity to believe that you all pray. But do you realize that God is the Father? Do you realize His presence?

2. Do we manifest any of the family likeness? Are we loved? Do we love? Do we realize a growing nearness to our beloved dead? Two tests will bring home this point. (1) Do you care for the little ones of the less fortunate in this great city? Do you take them in your arms and bless them as did Christ, our elder brother? That charity was born of heaven which, during this summer, has so tenderly cared for these many thousand helpless ones. (2) Have you deep, practical sympathy for the members of the Christian family in the plague-stricken South? Those are valorous souls who have taken their lives in their hands and gone down to relieve their brethren. Examine your hearts. What is your sympathy?

God be blessed for the assurance that we are members of this family of all believers on earth and in heaven, a family that will remain unbroken forever.

Self-Hurt of Sin.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY **C. N. Sims, D.D.,** IN THE SIMPSON M. E. CHURCH, BROOKLYN.

But he that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul.—Prov. viii: 36.

WISDOM, as used here, is the law of God concerning human life and conduct, and sin is the transgression of that law. The text, not in a spirit of haughty denunciation, but with sad and kindly warning, declares that he who transgresses that law wrongs his own soul, is the author of his own sorrow and suffering and loss.

There are many who have a wholly different view of the methods of God's punishments, and one which prevents a clear and full apprehension of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

They look upon God in this regard as a watchful governor, who detects the law-breakers, and with whips and fines and imprisonments and hangings punishes the guilty. Many have a sort of impression that Satan holds the office of God's jailer and executioner upon the incorrigibly wicked, and that he has a special appointment to torment lost souls. But God does not turn over the execution of His decrees to wicked spirits, nor does the Bible anywhere countenance this idea.

God's laws, under His immediate direction, work out the penalty of their own violation; in part here, fully hereafter. All God's purposes in us are accomplished by the operation of beneficent law. To break the law is to thwart His purposes and bring the ruin which naturally follows such a course.

The law of the piano is, that its strings shall be tuned in harmony, and that under the skillful touch of the key light, cushioned hammers shall strike them. So they give out genuine music. But if you fail to tune them in harmony, and then, lifting the lid, strike them with iron hammers, you get discord and destruction. You have transgressed the law of the piano.

The law of the watch is to submit to balance-wheel and regulator; take off the one or misplace the other, and your watch reports falsely all the time. You have transgressed its law.

The law of the circulation of the blood is from heart to artery, capillary, and back again by the veins; and as it goes it repairs waste, carries off useless matter and gives

health and strength. But if you open an artery and send the blood outside its course, you die. You have transgressed the law. How sinful and self-destructive, then, is the violation of law, and how fatally does he who thus sins wrong his own soul!

Consider.

I. Sin Against Physical Law.

1. *The law of nutrition.*—Hunger, flavor and the delight of the palate are God's arrangements for insuring the taking of proper food to repair the waste and supply the growth of the body. Break the law, and eat for the sake of pleasing the palate or increasing sociability, then indigestion, dullness, sleeplessness at night and sluggishness by day follow. Who shall estimate the sin against the temple of the soul?

2. *The nervous system.*—Its motor power is intended to carry messages out from the mind to the muscles, ordering work done and motion performed. Properly governed and temperately used, what usefulness, health and abundance of valuable labor accomplished may result! Abuse it, and exhaustion, prostration, paralysis follow. Its sensitive power gives confidence or warning of danger by pleasure or pain. But if we divert it from these high uses, and compel it to minister at the vile altar of bodily pleasure, then *trembling mania* and loathsome diseases ensue.

But sadder still is

II. The Spiritual Hurt.

1. *To the truth-perceiving faculties.*—The judgment and reason, acting under the restraint of a pure conscience, leads to the truth in a thousand ways: In business, society, pleasure, habits, indulgences—in all necessary things—and the life is guided in righteousness and wisdom. But let unholy ambition, improper desire for gain, any form of wicked selfishness get control of these faculties, and how they become warped, blinded, misguided! Men love darkness rather than light, and they make their dwelling in it.

2. *To the power of self-control.*—This is the battle of growing evil habits against the will—growing more and more impatient of restraint, more and more defiant of conscience and will, till appetite, strengthened into habit, leads manhood captive and blots out every hope and joy.

3. *To the religious nature.*—Properly acted upon by the Holy Spirit, it becomes God's audience-chamber in the soul; the natal chamber of the holiest purposes; the place where the strength comes which gives martyr power. Sinned against, the demons of superstition, distrust, hatred of good, vile affections, skepticism and cold dark atheism come in to torment the soul.

4. *To the joys of memory and hope.*—Every life gathers up all its past and holds it in its present possession forever more by faithful memory ; and if that past be one of holy purpose and noble endeavor—if it has been one of fidelity to God, every record it holds will be a joy forever, its pains will turn to pleasure, its hardships to victories, its struggles to triumphs. But if its records be of deceit and dishonesty, of lust and recklessness, then *remorse* pours her bitterness into every recollection.

There is no joy of hope if we sin against wisdom. Two young men work for the same wise, generous and just employer, who is absent for a year. Each knows he will be rewarded according to his deserts when the proprietor returns. The one, by self-sacrifice, fidelity and untainted honesty, works for his master's interest ; the other neglects business, steals his employer's money and attempts concealment by false entries. Do they both contemplate the master's return with equal hope ? For one there is hope ; for the other apprehension. There is no ray of hope for the sinner.

III. He that Sins Against Wisdom Interferes with God's Purposes for the Future.

God has great ambitions for us. He would build in us *noble character*. Sin defeats His wish and makes our character ignoble.

He would make us useful ; sin makes us hurtful to others. He would make us happy ; sin makes us wretched utterly and forever.

He would have us grow in spiritual beauty, symmetry and power ; sin deforms, enfeebles and mars our being.

In the onworking of God's great, holy and beneficent laws is infinite good ; but he who takes his life out from their control and submits it to the guidance of self and sin wrongs, oh ! how cruelly, his own soul !

The Prayer for Increase of Faith.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY **Samuel H. Weller, D.D.,** OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, LINCOLN, NEB., IN THE ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, BROOKLYN.

Lord, increase our faith.—Luke xvii: 5.

THE greatest need of our time is a larger Christian faith. We have an abundance of faith of a sort. Every community abounds in persons whom the schools call "historical" believers. Our Christianity is strong in the head but weak in the heart. We are, hence, able easily to hold our own in the debate as against the skeptic. We have a measure of genuine Christian faith, but it lacks in scope, in sweep, in power. It lacks lamentably in convincing, converting, overwhelming power. The text is a prayer. It is the prayer of Christ's immediate disciples. It recognizes Christ as the hearer and answerer of prayer. It is a prayer, moreover, for larger faith. It becomes thus an example for us to look to the same source for our much-needed increase of faith. There are many reasons why we should have this greater faith.

I. *We need it that as Christians we may apprehend our inheritance.* Few have any adequate notion of its significance. To many it is a *hope* to be realized by and by, but absolutely nothing now. To others their religion is a *consolation* as they walk under the shadows, but very little in the broad, sweet sunshine of material health and prosperity. Then there are those who regard it simply as a *mode of life*—perhaps the best mode of life, and so avow it on sheer economic grounds. And yet again it is looked upon as a *salvation.* It offers a way of escape from sin and its consequences and men accept it under whip of fear. We want a faith that will see in the new life something greater and better than all this. We want to see in it an inheritance which makes these ends possible and certain, and yet which inherently is infinitely more. True faith accounts it a power that allies the human with the divine; that smites evil and enthrones truth; that enriches and exalts manhood and glorifies it.

Christians are to realize that they are heirs, heirs of God, hence are become sharers in God's possessions—sharers in God's honor, power, glory. "All things are yours." Our religion, hence, has a depth of meaning of which we little dream. We get into ruts. Our worship drops into forms.

The Christian's faith should see something of infinite value beneath these forms.

A man has a garden which he prizes because of the annual harvests he is able to gather from it. The riches it brings him are from the surface and are satisfactory. He has no faith that looks beneath for treasure. He values his garden for what the surface yields. But suppose that upon good evidence he comes to believe that there is beneath this surface a mine of gold. Now what before satisfied sinks into insignificance. He is no longer content with the surface harvests. His whole mind, all his energies are absorbed by the *mine* of wealth discovered deeper down. So we are getting from our religion the fruits chiefly of surface tillage. We admire its forms; we prize its civilizing tendencies. We forget to inquire whether it has anything better for us. We are satisfied with this routine. Our faith fails to see other treasures and the real ones. Inexhaustible stores lie undiscovered beneath these forms. The surface values are religion's least values and are only incidental. As faith increases the treasure magnifies. Strong faith makes the true men, the mighty men, the conquering men —the Pauls and Luthers, the Wesleys and Moodys. We need a faith strong enough to realize this worth in our holy religion. In our ignorance we trifle. During the Crimean war a dying soldier of the French army gave to the woman, who had cared for him, what she took to be a simple memento. This she kept and valued because of its associations and its beauty. She finally hung it on the wall above the mantel in her humble dwelling. A few years since a stranger calling assured her that what she deemed but a picture was a note of the largest denomination issued by the Bank of France. Through years of poverty she had been in actual possession of what was to her a real fortune. She cherished the form but failed to see the actual treasure which it represented. How Christians prize the picture but fail to read its meaning! We hold a nameless treasure, but our faith is too weak to see it.

II. *We need increased faith that our Christian activities may be quickened.*—What could we not accomplish did we fully realize what our religion is? The measure of the Church's faith is the measure of her effectiveness. Proper faith would stay the tide of the world's wickedness. In the great cities, which are the centres of commercial life and strength, the dangerous classes are increasing out of all proportion to the increase of the population. Our faith is meagre. When we rise up higher we will be surprised at our present dullness of vision. The Church is held in check to-day because of feeble faith. Let faith be increased, and

it will move onward with resistless power. Recently, in one of our cities, a man was condemned to die for the murder of his brother. The friends of the doomed man labored day and night for the commutation of the sentence. They succeeded. That which gave them this conquering energy was a twofold faith—faith in the peril of the condemned man and faith in the fact that there was help in but one direction. The Christian's faith needs to be quickened in two directions: first, in the peril of the ungodly and then in the truth that there is but one way of escape. Touched by the power of the increased faith, all Christian life would become athrill with new zeal. The activities of the Church need the inspiring influence of the larger faith in man's peril and God's mercy.

III. *Faith is the condition of the divine working.*—The unbelief of the people limited Christ's miracles at Nazareth. To the two blind men He said: "According to your faith be it unto you." At the foot of Mount Tabor the disciples failed for lack of faith. In the context they are assured that even with a faith that is small, but genuine, nothing shall be impossible to them. Such faith endows man with God's power. There is, hence, no limit to the Church's ability with such faith. It is claimed that this faith belongs to a past age—an age of miracles. If there is any warrant in the Word for such limitation, I have been unable to find it. The possession of Almighty strength is conditioned on faith; facts can be adduced to confirm it. In recent revivals there are thousands of instances in which evil habit that has been grained into the constitution has been radically removed. For a long time it seemed to me a fanaticism, but facts confront me which oblige me to look higher for explanation. The Church ought to be clothed with power. I am convinced the power is offered. Faith is its condition.

IV. *Faith is the condition of Christian assurance.*—Every Christian should be able to say, I know that I have passed from death unto life. Too much is involved here and hereafter for us to rest in perpetual doubt. He who only guesses himself a child of God can never be strong. He cannot be full of peace when the shadows come. The question of the "higher life" is agitating the best men of the age.